

E. Rydell Junr

THE
MIDNIGHT BELL,
A GERMAN STORY.

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FOUNDED ON INCIDENTS IN REAL LIFE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

A round unvarnish'd tale. OTHELLO.

VOL. III.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR H. D. SYMONDS, NO. 20, PATER-
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1798.

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THE
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CHAP. XVIII.

My soul's delight, my utmost joy, my husband !
I feel once more his panting bosom beat ;
Once more I hold him in my eager arms,
Behold his face, and lose my soul in rapture.

Essex. Transporting bliss ! my richest, dearest
treasure !

My mourning turtle, my long absent peace,
Oh come yet nearer, nearer to my heart !
My raptured soul springs forward to receive thee :
Thou heav'n on earth, thou balm of all my woe.

THE EARL OF ESSEX.

A FERVENT kiss, imprinted on her cold
lips, recalled Lauretta into existence, and she
opened her eyes in the wildest apprehension :

but oh ! what a glow of mingled extasy and delight warmed her frozen blood, when she perceived that it was Alphonfus, her beloved Alphonfus, who had bestowed the kiss that had awakened her from her trance.

In an unbounded transport of joy she embraced him as he stood by her side ; then springing from the bed on which she had been laid, she flew to meet the embrace of her father, and then again sunk on the neck of her Alphonfus.

When their mutual effusions of joy gave room for an explanation on the part of count Byroff, Laurretta learnt from the lips of her father, whom it had been her first care to teach Alphonfus to know as such, that she was still in the shepherd's cottage, that Kroonzer had been put to flight by the

united efforts of her father and the peasant, and that the chevalier had been killed by a blow from the hand of her husband, with the oaken staff which he had first obtained from the young peasant when he overcame him, and which Alphonfus had wrested from him.

Alphonfus then briefly informed Lauretta of the manner in which he had early that morning left Smaldart castle, and by the most fortunate chance had arrived to her rescue at the moment she was on the point of falling a prey to the villany of Theodore.

Lauretta shuddered at the idea of the danger she had so unexpectedly escaped, and again clasped to her breast the author of her preservation: he returned her embrace with

all the fervor of that warm affection he bore her, and then turning to count Byroff, he said, "Advise me, I beseech you, what course to follow, whither to bend my steps."

"What opposes your now returning to your humble dwelling immediately?" asked the count.

"To meet the baron Smaldart?" rejoined Alphonfus.

"The law is on your side:" resumed count Byroff.

"I should feel less reluctance to behold him if it were against me;" replied Alphonfus. "I cannot bear to meet the man I have so deeply wounded, when I know him void of the means of redress. — He has ever con-

sidered Theodore with the partiality of a father, and consequently must have viewed the enormity of his crimes with a softening eye ; can he then do otherwise than detest the man who has deprived him of the darling of his heart ? — I am convinced I have not acted wrongly : thus I cannot submit to sue for his forgiveness ; and the compassion I feel for the grief I shall have excited in the breast of one who has behaved towards me with the kindness I have experienced from the baron Smaldart, commands me not to return to a spot where my presence might seem a triumph over the sorrow I had occasioned : no ! I will seek some distant asylum, where, living forgotten, I shall not renew his misery.”

“ From a selfish motive,” said count Byroff, “ I warmly subscribe to your idea of

leaving this part of the empire; for, having been seen by Kroonzer, it is absolutely necessary for the preservation of my life, that I should fly immediately from hence; thus, should you resolve to return to your late dwelling, I must forego the society of my child: should you remove to some distant spot, I may still be your companion."

The happiness of his Lauretta was at all times the first consideration of Alphonfus; and as he now read speakingly in her blue eyes, her dislike to her separation from her father, he instantly declared that he was resolved on not returning to the vicinity of Smaldart castle, and prepared to travel in any direction the count should dictate as most likely to ensure his safety.

Mutual satisfaction beamed in the eyes of

the count and Laurretta, at this declaration of Alphonfus; and the count pressed that they might set out immediately.

In a few minutes the horses were prepared by the peasant, whom count Byroff having liberally rewarded for his exertions, and, at the instigation of Alphonfus, commanded him to send a messenger to Smaldart castle, with a full and exact account of the transactions of the morning, they departed, bending their course, in compliance with the directions of the count, towards the north.

Having stopped during the day no longer than was absolutely necessary for the refreshment of themselves and their horses, they arrived towards night at a little inn, where count Byroff said he trusted himself to be in safety.

Immediately on their being left alone in an apartment of the inn, Lauretta asked of her father the conclusion of his history ; eager to learn the mystery of the situation in which she had at first seen him, and the cause of the danger he had so strongly expressed of being overtaken during the course of their day's journey.

“ My child,” answered count Byroff, “ I confess that your curiosity has been strongly excited, but weightier considerations must supersede its gratification ; we must look forward to the necessities of the future, ere we allow ourselves leisure to indulge in the remembrance of the past.” Then addressing himself to Alphonfus, “ Have you formed any plan of future life ?” he asked.

Alphonfus answered, not.

After a pause, count Byroff continued, "You have appeared thoughtful during our journey : I conjectured you might have been deliberating on some measures which you were undecided whether or not to adopt."

"You conjectured rightly," replied Alphonsus, "in thinking my mind thus employed."

"What were your thoughts ?"

"I fear you will not approve them ; however, be assured I will do nothing without the concurrence of yourself and my Lauretta."

Count Byroff besought him to proceed.

"My Laurretta," he continued, "has doubtless related to you the ambiguous and sorrowful event which marks my early life?"

"She has."

"I cannot die happy, unless I solve the mystery by which I am driven a wanderer upon the world; its recollection clouds every moment of my existence, and renders me, in the summer of life, a gloomy and thoughtful companion to her, who, knowing the cause of my melancholy, bears, with an angel-like patience, the four effects it will at times, in spite of my endeavours to coerce them, produce in me. Were it not better at once to end these agonising doubts, to visit the neighbourhood of Cohenburg castle, and, by discovering if possible the truth, learn at once my future doom?"

“It is a point,” returned count Byroff, “whereon I cannot pretend to advise you; your sole guide must be the impulse of your own heart.”

“But,” said Laupetta, “whence is the intelligence you wish to procure to be gained? — The country round Cohenburg is doubtless unacquainted with the truth, or the young miner, the son of one of your father’s vassals, must have known it: — your uncle, he informed you, was gone, no one knew whither, and your mother dead!”

“He said the same of me,” returned Alphonsus; “thus his information in this point sways me not. — But he pronounced the castle to be deserted; this was a matter in which he could not be deceived; thus if I visit it secretly, I can offend no one by so doing;

and I will guard against wounding my conscience by the relation of any discovery I may there make, should its secrecy seem to be required of me by the injunctions laid on me by my mother: and Oh! I have for some time laboured with an undescribable prepossession that I shall gain knowledge of moment, if I do visit it."

"You are then resolved?" said count Byroff.

"I have nothing wanting to complete my resolution, since you and my Lauretta do not seem to oppose it, but the means of accomplishing my journey."

"I have that in my possession," replied the count, "which, with frugality, will yet support us many weeks."

“Then to-morrow, with the dawn, I will once more turn my steps towards my native soil,” said Alphonfus.

The remainder of the evening was spent by them in concerting the route they should travel; and having planned it to their mutual satisfaction, they at an early hour retired to rest.

Reflection on what might be the event of a long-wished, and at length projected, undertaking, suffered Alphonfus to sleep but little, and he rose with the dawn to awake his fellow-traveller: the count instantly obeyed his summons, and at sun-rise they set forward on their journey.

As they proceeded, count Byroff lightened the way by again commencing the narra-

tive of his life, in complaisance to the curiosity of Alphonfus; and being arrived at the period to which he had deduced his story, when in the shepherd's cottage he had related it to Lauretta, he thus went on.

“When I had recovered from the influence of the draught I had taken, which had been only a sleeping potion of a very strong nature, the first object on which I opened my eyes, was a black man sitting by my side, in a dry ditch, under the shade of a hedge; the time was twilight in the evening, and being too dusk for me accurately to discern his features, I perceived not, until he spoke, that my companion was the young jailor, with a new countenance: and when I did know him, I was some moments at a loss whether to express my astonishment first, at his change of colour, or my own ex-

traordinary appearance, for I found myself habited in the garments of a French woman of mean rank.

“ ‘ Ah, *monfieur* !’ cried he immediately on beholding me open my eyes, ‘ how glad am I to fee you awake again, and out of that vile prifon !—Don’t you know me, *monfieur* ?’ continued he, obferving that my eyes were fixed on him in doubt.

“ ‘ I think I do now,’ I returned, after having been convinced by his voice who he was : ‘ but I hardly know myfelf.’

“ ‘ I thought how it would be when you awoke,’ replied he ; ‘ I contrived thefe difguifes that we might pafs unnoticed as beggars ;—but here, *Monfieur*, take a fup of wine, and eat a bit of bread,’ faid he,

pulling a flask and a crust from his pocket,
'and refresh yourself; for you must be faint
with so long fasting.'

"I readily accepted his offer; and while
the flask was at my mouth, he exclaimed,
'*Dieu merci*, that we are out of that horrid
place!'

" 'Why, you were not a prisoner?' I
said.

" 'Oh no, *monfieur*; but I felt so much
for the poor creatures that were, that I could
not bear to see them suffer any longer.—
But, however, we are out now, and I hope
for ever:—woe be to us if we get in again!'

" 'But how did we get out, my good

fellow?—How did you contrive our escape?’
I asked.

“ ‘ I’ll tell you another time, *monsieur* :
we must not talk about it any more now, for
fear we should be overheard :—*Jacques Per-*
let will tell you all about it another time. —
Oh, but, *monsieur*, you must not call me
Jacques now, but some other name, such as
blacks go by : — what shall it be, *monsieur* ?”

“ ‘ Shall it be *Cæsar* ?’ I replied.

“ ‘ Aye, *monsieur*,’ said he, ‘ as well as
any.—Now, *monsieur*, please to remember
that, for carrying on my plan, you must, if
you please, pretend to be my wife ; your
features are very delicate, and you may easily
pass for a woman ; and leave the rest to
Jac——*Cæsar* I mean, *monsieur*.’ ”

“ I readily agreed to any plan of security in my present situation ; and Jacques then told me we must now walk forwards to a small *auberge*, which he said he knew stood rather sequestered from the road, and where we were to pass the night.

“ In our way, I asked him how far we were from Paris.

“ ‘ Oh, nine or ten *lieues*, *monseigneur*,’ answered he.”

“ ‘ By what means did we perform the journey?’

“ ‘ It is so dark, *monseigneur*,’ said he, ‘ that I can’t see whether any body is near us or not ; — I durst not tell you any thing till by and by.’

" I checked my curiosity, conscious how judiciously my guide was acting; and we arrived within sight of the little inn in silence.

" According to the directions of Jacques, I asked in French for a mean supper and bed, while my companion only occasionally spoke in the vitiated manner in which negroes usually pronounce a language which they have no opportunity of learning but by the ear.

" I was rejoiced to perceive that our stratagem passed unsuspected; and when we retired to bed, which we did in the characters of husband and wife, the better to conceal our real ones, Jacques desired me to sit down, saying he must have a little chat with me before we went to bed, for his tongue

was burning to tell me how nicely he had managed our escape.

“ I was, as you may suppose, anxious to learn how my salvation from death had been effected during the time of my insensibility ; and placing myself on the foot of the bed, I desired him to begin ; he seated himself on the ground by my side, and leaning his arm upon the bed, spoke thus :

“ ‘ In the first place, *monfieur*, I must tell you a little about who I am, that you may the better understand my reasons for what I have done.—My father, *monfieur*, was a very honest *frivetier* in the *fauxbourg St. Antoine*, and at one time earned a very comfortable living ; but misfortunes will happen to the best of people, and one mishap or an-

other had obliged him to borrow small sums of money from several of his neighbours, chiefly to defray the expenses of my mother's illness and funeral, all which he would honestly have repaid, I am sure, if he had lived; but he died, poor man, soon after, and left me without a friend in the world, except my uncle Perlet, the old jailor at the Bastile, and a brother we had none of us heard of for many years.

“ ‘ Well, I had been brought up to my father's trade; and if he had not left me heir to his debts as well as to his business, (which God forbid I should blame him for; for how could he have helped it, if even he had known he had been going to die?) I might have gained myself a pretty livelihood: but his creditors threatened to arrest me for the money, and so my uncle Perlet, too avari-

cious to pay it for me, and too proud to see his nephew confined in a jail, though he lived in a prison himself, took me to serve under him in the Bastille.

“ ‘ I did not like going there at all ; but what could I do, *monfieur* ? I thought it was better than starving ; but by the time I had been there a couple of months, which was about the time I first came to bring you your portion of bread and water, I would almost sooner have died than have staid much longer where I was ; for the frightful things I saw, and the groans, and moans, and shrieks I heard in that dismal place, would freeze your blood, and make your hair stand on end, *monfieur*, if I was to tell you them all.’

“ I sighed in the affirmative to Jacques’

exclamation ; and he continued : ‘ Ah, *monfieur*, you have had your share of their devil’s works, I dare fay ?’

“ ‘ It is paft now, fo let us drive away its remembrance,’ I replied.

“ ‘ I wifh I could, *monfieur* : but I fhall dream of it many a night to come, I dare fay. — My uncle,’ continued he, ‘ had a room where he and I ufed to fit by ourfelves in an evening : and as my head was continually running upon the poor unhappy wretches I attended in the day-time, I could not forbear queftioning him about them ; and many a time, when I heard the ftory of a poor helpless creature condemned to die by the rack, or poifon, I could not help thinking of the fate of his perfecutors at a future day, that all of us muft fee.

“ ‘ Sometimes I used to remonstrate with my uncle on the cruelty with which he often assisted in using the unhappy prisoners ; but his answer always was, ‘ Jacques, I am a true lover of my king, and I’ll never treat those kindly, depend upon it, that it is his pleasure to have otherwise dealt by.’—‘ But may not obedience,’ I would answer, ‘ be carried so far as to make conscience troublesome ?’

“ ‘ Impossible, child,’ he once answered me, when I had thus spoken to him ; ‘ the king is the representative of God on earth, chosen by himself ; thus we can never be doing wrong, while we implicitly obey his commands.’—‘ Then,’ returned I, ‘ how careful ought the king to be, for his own sake, that his conduct is kind, merciful, and forgiving, since, as you say, the consciences

of all his subjects, if they have done amiss in compliance with his commands, are cleared from guilt; of course the weight of all their bad actions must lie upon his conscience instead of theirs, and he be punished accordingly hereafter.'

" 'You are a foolish boy,' cried he, 'and don't understand these matters.'

" 'I made him no answer; for truly, *monseigneur*, I did not wish to know more than I already did of a conduct that seemed to me void of reason and humanity; I had only a mind to ask him whether he prayed to the king instead of *le bon Dieu*; but I durst not, for fear he should think I was laughing at him, and use me as hardly as he had done others for less offences.'

“ I could not help smiling at Jacques’s philosophy ; he laughed too, and thus went on —

“ ‘ Well, *monseigneur*, every day I began to long more and more to quit my situation ; but it was a thing I almost despaired to be able to do ; for I was well aware that my uncle would never give his consent to my leaving the Bastille for any other employment, for fear I should tell tales out of prison ; so I knew the only method must be to run away to a distance from Paris ; but then I had not much money, and I did not much like to make such an attempt without a companion.’

“ ‘ Some how, *monseigneur*, I had taken a liking to you above any of the prisoners I attended ; and all I kept wishing for, was some

means of setting you at liberty, that we might run away together; I knew, if I could contrive it, you could not dislike it, and there was something in your countenance that told me you would be kind to me afterwards.

“Oh, *monfieur*! how often have I wished to sit and talk half an hour or an hour with you, and tell you how much I pitied you, and how I wished to serve you; but I durst not, for all the walls in that Bastille have eyes and ears, I believe; for nothing can be said or done but what is known by my uncle and the governor.—I often inquired of my uncle something about you, and I learnt, a little at a time, that you were, as most of the other prisoners are, a gentleman; and that you were only retained in prison because they were afraid to let you

out, for fear you should expose the secrets of their tyranny.

“ ‘ And is it owing to the king that the poor gentleman suffers all this for nothing?’ said I.

“ ‘ Partly,’ my uncle answered, ‘ and partly to those who first represented him to *sa majesté*, as obnoxious to the state.’

“ ‘ Then the king has some good friends, who lighten the burthen of his conscience by taking a little of it upon their own,’ said I.

“ ‘ My uncle answered me with a look which determined me never to hazard a joke again, on what he deemed so sacred a subject.

“ ‘ About five weeks ago, my uncle told

me, as he had given up the care of half his prisoners to me, I must fill every part of the office myself, and accordingly on the next morning must carry a dose of poison into the apartment of a *marquis*, who was condemned to die: I was afraid of disobeying my uncle; and I knew besides that if I did not do it, somebody else would, so that my refusal would be of no service to the poor wretch; and thus, at the time appointed, I attended the governor to the cell, just as I came with him into yours, *monseigneur*, on the morning when he thought he was giving you your last dose: but I was too fly for him, — eh, *monseigneur*?

“ ‘ When the poor gentleman had swallowed the draught, and the governor had left the apartment, my uncle locked the door

upon the dying man, saying, 'nobody must go in any more till he was dead.'

" 'What ! must we leave him all alone at this terrible moment ?' asked I.

" 'Why, does he want any body to help him to die ?' returned my uncle.

" ' *Ab, pauvre diable !* I wish it was over with him,' said I.

" 'It won't be long, I'll answer for it,' he replied, and then commanded me to leave the door by which I was standing, and could not help trying to listen what was passing within.

" 'In the evening, when all the prison

doors were double locked for the night, he called me to follow him up stairs, and we went together into the poor *marquis's* apartment. Oh dear, *monseigneur*, I shall never forget it. There lay the poor gentleman dead and cold, and all his features so dreadfully distorted, and his eyes and mouth wide open, that I should have run out of the room with fright if my uncle had not held me by the collar.

“ ‘ Now,’ said my uncle, ‘ we must carry the corpse into the *cimetière*, and bury it.’ ”

“ ‘ I was forced to obey, and we carried down the body to the spot he had named, where stood a coffin ready to receive it.

“ ‘ I suppose you think,’ said he, ‘ I am going to bury this man? No! no! I know

a better trick than that; I'll never bury a corpse whilst I can get well paid for letting it remain above ground.' He then told me, that a surgeon in *La rue de Saint Etienne le grand* always bought the bodies of him to dissect; and that as he had the privilege of passing the draw-bridge when he pleased, he had always carried them to him by night; 'but,' said he, 'I'll contrive for you to carry this one, and I'll bury the coffin in the mean time.'

“ ‘ Well, *monfieur*, the body was put into a sack; I pretended it was so heavy I could not carry it; my uncle knew better, and I was forced to set off according to his directions: he went with me to the draw-bridge, and having whispered the guards, they let me pass.

“ ‘ Do you know, *monfieur*, I’d wager my life, the governor and he went shares in felling the dead men ; for nobody, I had often heard my uncle fay, could go over the draw bridge without the governor’s knowing it, and giving leave.

“ ‘ Notwithstanding the weight of my burthen, I ran all the way ; for not being accustomed to be fo near dead people, I thought every moment I could feel him stirring and groaning.

“ ‘ When I had got quit of my load, I began to confider whether I fhould go back or not ; I felt in my pocket to fee how much money I was worth in cafe I took the chance of running away, when, *pardi, monfieur* ! if I had not left my purfe at home. I did not know what to do now ; for having nothing

to support myself with, I thought I could not go far without money, so might be heard of by my uncle, taken back to the Bastille, and perhaps roasted alive for what I had done, by the great fire in that room where all the irons are hanging about: I trembled at the very thought of it, and so ran back as fast as my legs could carry me.

“ ‘ When I returned back to my uncle, he gave me an *écu de six francs* out of his profits, as a reward for what I had done, saying, he would double it the next job, for he was determined I should not want for encouragement, and I should soon have another, for *monseigneur Montville* had not much longer to live.

“ ‘ I was not a little surprised and disturbed at hearing this, *monseigneur*, as you may

suppose ; and I was sure that if any thing could be done, it must be done directly. Well, I kept thinking, and thinking, and no way could I contrive to get you out ; at last a plan came into my head, and I resolved I would try it whether it succeeded or not. I complained to my uncle that I had got a very bad tooth-ache, and told him that I had frequently been subject to it, and that my father had been used to give me some laudanum to cure it, and begged that he would too.

“ He gave me a small phial about half full, warning me to be very careful how I used it ; I immediately ran with it to my own chamber, and having poured it into the phial that had held the poison given to the poor dead *marquis*, and which I had washed out for that purpose, I let fall the empty

phial: it broke with the fall, just as I wished; I ran down to my uncle with the broken pieces in my hand, and telling him my misfortune, begged him to give me some more.

“ ‘The old fox was taken in for once, *monfieur*, and he brought me about as much as before.

“ ‘I suppose,’ said I, as I took it from him, ‘if I was to drink all this stuff, it would kill me?’

“ ‘Twice as much would,’ he replied: ‘that would make you sleep for about two days.’

“ ‘I found by this that my first quantity would have been enough for what I wanted with it, but however I thought it was no

bad thing to have two doses by me, in case any accident happened to one of them; and so I put them both carefully by, and by the next night my tooth-ache was gone.

“ ‘ Well, *monjieur*, at last the day was fixed for you to die upon: I found means of coming to your window, as you must recollect, the night before; and when I told you not to refuse to drink any thing that was offered you, I said it because I was afraid you might by some means spill the potion that would be given to you, thinking it to be poison, as you could not know I had contrived to give you laudanum in its stead, and then might be obliged to take the poison indeed, as a second dose would have been brought you, that I should have had no opportunity of changing.

“ ‘ When I left the outside of your prison window, I went and got one of my phials half full of laudanum. Now the poison phials are always full ; so I knew my false one must be so too, or it would discover the trick. I durst not put in any more laudanum for fear I should kill you, and if I filled it up with water, it would look so much paler than the poison ; so at last, what do you think I did, *monseigneur* ? — why, I filled it up with treacle and water, and it looked quite black, just like what it should have been.

“ ‘ When morning came, I was called to attend the governor : my uncle gave me the phial of poison ; and I, to deceive him, said in a low voice, ‘ to-night I shall earn *deux écus*.’ He nodded significantly, and I

followed the governor and his guards. At the turn from the last flight of stairs into the gallery, I stopped an instant, and snatching my phial from my bosom, and slipping the other into its place, I made a noise with my feet as if saving myself from falling; and then running a step or two after the governor, and rubbing my knee as if I had bruised it, 'better so than a broken leg,' I cried: the governor turned round and looked at me; still rubbing my knee, I drew up a face which made him smile at my supposed accident, and he walked on without suspicion.' "

The travellers at this moment arrived within sight of a small house, and Alphonfus interrupted the count's narrative, by proposing, that, if it proved a house of public accommodation, they should make it their abode for the night, as the twilight was al-

ready beginning to fall. To this proposal count Byroff agreed; and the habitation proving to be such as they wished it, they here put an end to their day's journey.

CHAP. XIX.

With'd morning's come! And now upon the plains
And distant mountains, where they feed their flocks,
The happy shepherds leave their homely huts,
And with their lusty pipes proclaim the new-born day.
The cheerful birds too, on the tops of trees,
Assemble all in choirs, and with their notes
Salute and welcome up the rising sun.
There's no condition sure so curs'd as mine!

OTWAY.

REFRESHED by the salutary balm of sleep, our travellers awoke to one of the most glorious mornings that ever burst from the heavens; the sun was beginning his progress towards his meridian of splendor, without a single cloud to obscure his expanding rays; the pearly drops of dew were still hanging on the dripping leaves, and stud-

ding the blades of grass; every bush resounding with the grateful notes of its feathered inhabitants, hailing the return of morn; and every flower exhaling sweets in gratitude to the rising presence of their fostering orb.

Again blessed with her Alphonfus, Lauretta's feelings harmonised in the universal gladness of nature: Alphonfus strove to be cheerful, but his efforts were ineffectual; Lauretta observed his dejectedness, and without remarking upon it, endeavoured to divert it. She was sometimes successful: again Alphonfus sunk into thought; she varied her attentions; he returned a smile of gratitude for her endeavours to please, and she was happy.

Having made a delicious repast of new

milk and fruits, they again proceeded on their journey, and after a short conversation on various topics, count Byroff thus pursued his narrative —

“ ‘ Well, *monseigneur*,’ continued Jacques Periet, ‘ all day long I was wishing, I hardly knew why, to come and take a peep at you; however I should not have been allowed if I had asked it, and at all events I thought it was much more prudent not. At night my uncle called me to go up with him about the same time he had done before, and, oh dear, how frightened I was all the way up stairs! — for it had just come into my head you might not be asleep yet; and then, when I found you was asleep, I was as much afraid my uncle’s rough handling, or some unlucky blow in lifting you, might awake you,

“ ‘ However, *Dieu merci*, we got you down stairs, and into the *cimetière* quite safe: I trembled a little when my uncle said he thought you was very warm; but I soon recovered again when he added, that he thought nothing of that, for that he had carried away many a one before they were half cold.

“ ‘ In a few minutes I got you put into the sack, taking care to lay you with your head towards the mouth, and away I went, leaving my uncle to bury the coffin, and wait my return.

“ ‘ Instead of going to the surgeon’s, I made the best of my way for *la porte de Saint Jean*; and being got out of the city, I looked for the first hedge I could find, and setting down my load on the side farthest

from the road, I pulled you out of the sack, terrified to death for fear I should have smothered you; and pleased enough I was, when I put my hand to your side, and felt your heart heave. I directly set about putting you on this gown and petticoat, and hat, and apron, and cloak, that I had taken from the old woman in the Bastille that is kept to make my uncle's and the governor's beds. I did not rob her of them, *monfieur*, for I put a *demi-louis* into her box when I took them out; and the manner I contrived to bring them away with me, was by buttoning them in between my coat and waistcoat, and telling my uncle it was a lump of cloth I had put there to keep the weight of my load from hurting my shoulder.

“ “ When I had dressed you, I set about disguising myself, and having turned all my

clothes inside outwards, I dyed my hands and face with some stuff I had brought in my pocket for that purpose ; I then threw the clothes I had taken off you, together with the sack, over the opposite hedge, into a deep ditch, and then sat me down by your side, anxiously waiting till some cart might come past that would carry us a little farther from our old abode.

About day-break I heard the wheels of some carriage coming from the city ; I peeped over the hedge, and saw a waggon full of luggage, in the front of which sat one man, on a bench large enough to hold three or four ; I called to him, asking, ‘ Whither he was going ? ’—‘ To Desmartin,’ he answered. Then, pretending that I was hardly able to express myself in French, I told him that I had a sick wife almost at

the point of death lying behind the hedge, and that I would give him a trifle to carry us some way on our journey, which lay his road: after a short dispute about what I was to pay him, he consented to carry us, and I lifted you into the waggon and placed you upon the seat, carefully holding you, lest you should fall out.

“ We stopped several times during the day; some pitied my poor wife, some laughed at me for a black *fourbe*, and some were charitable enough to give me a *petit sous*, and bid me take care of *la pauvre ame*; and I directly bought the wine and bread in their presence, which I gave you under the hedge, for which they all called me a *bon garçon*, and one old woman doubled her charity.

“ ‘ I had not taken you out of the waggon all day, for fear, if I did, the people should crowd round you out of curiosity, and discover the imposition : evening was coming on, and you did not wake ; we were within a *lieue* of Desmartin, and I did not know what to do ; at last I remembered this little *cabaret*, which stands a few hundred paces from the high road, for I had once in my life travelled as far as Desmartin ; and telling the waggoner I meant to pass the night there, as inns in towns were too expensive for me, I desired, when we came in sight of it, to get out. He accordingly stopped, and having taken you out, and paid him his promised fare, we wished one another *bon soir*, and on he drove.

“ ‘ Well, *monfieur*, I knew it could not be long before you woke ; so I determined not

to go to the *cabaret* till you did ; so I entered the first field with you in my arms, and having spied the dry ditch where we were when you awoke, I laid you down in it, and seating myself by you, chuckled not a little to myself at the success of my plan, — and when you awoke I was just thinking how you and I should both laugh if we could see ourselves in a *miroir*.’

“When Jacques had ended his account, having thanked him in the warmest terms for the interest he had so kindly taken in my welfare, and commended the adroitness with which he had effected our escape, I told him that it behoved us immediately to conclude on some plan for leaving the kingdom with all possible expedition ; for if my being alive was not discovered, he would doubtless be sent in search of by his uncle, and that if

one was taken, the other would in course share his fate, and then both, beyond a doubt, fall sacrifices to the butchers in the Bastille.

“ ‘Why, *monseigneur*,’ replied he, ‘let us set forward as fast as we can to your home, wherever it is.’

“ How astonished was the poor fellow to hear I had neither home nor means of subsistence! He had expected to find me a man of rank and fortune either in Italy or Germany, he knew not which, and who would liberally repay him for his services. He, however, bore his disappointment with the most honourable fortitude, and he drew tears into my eyes by exclaiming, after a short pause of reflection — ‘Well, *monseigneur*, if you had been *un homme de bien*, I am sure you

would have taken care of *pauvre Jacques*; as you are not, Jacques will take care of you as well as he is able: as long as that money lasts, half of it is yours;’ and so saying, he pulled from his pocket his whole worldly treasure, and threw it upon the bed.

“After much deliberation, we resolved to travel into Germany in our present disguises, for what purpose neither of us knew, except that we must leave France, and that all places were equally indifferent; for to take possession again of the mansion and estate I had once quitted, I knew to be an impossibility for me at the present moment to attempt, incumbered as it was with debts and mortgages.

“Next morning at a very early hour we set forward on our journey, and to our great

satisfaction arrived in about ten days' time in Germany, without having suffered more on our journey than what was occasioned by fatigue, and our own fears. During the whole expedition, Jacques' conversation was confined to two subjects — his apprehension of being pursued and overtaken, and his wish of being acquainted in what part of the empire was his brother, who had left Paris about four years ago with a man whom nobody knew, and with whom he had only said he was going into Germany. 'He was an idle fellow,' continued Jacques, 'and, I dare say, took to some lazy kind of life; and *pardi*, so was his former one, for he could not have a much easier business than *valet de chambre* to a *marquis*: it suited him, for he got fine clothes, and strutted about like a *singe poudré*: I might have had his place when he went away, but I preferred homeliness and

hard work to such frippery ; and you see how I am rewarded for my honesty ; but hard fare here, better hereafter, says *l'évangile* ; so I am never cast down, *monfieur*, happen what will.

“ There was something consolatory to me in the reasoning of my humble companion, and I determined to put myself under the guidance of one so chearful amidst misfortunes, and confident in providence under its painful inflictions, and accordingly told him I was resolved to be entirely directed by him in what course to follow for gaining our future subsistence.

“ After some deliberation, Jacques proposed that we should endeavour to push our way to the capital of the empire, where he said he should stand a chance of being bet-

ter paid for exercising his trade, as the value of his work would there be better estimated, being, as he assured me, an excellent workman.

“ On the first day of our arrival in Germany, Jacques took advantage of a pool of water somewhat sequestered from the road, again to change the complexion of his face and hands, but it was some days ere he could accomplish a perfect triumph of the ivory over the ebony; however, having turned his clothes into their proper situation, his appearance became decent; and at the next town, having purchased for me a wrapping coat and a hat, I changed the outward form of my sex behind the first hedge we came to on our again proceeding on our journey.

“ The cash Jacques now had left, con-

list, in all, of a *louis d'or* and *deux écus*; accordingly, in order to housewife the money we possessed, it not appearing to us so easy a matter to acquire more when it was spent, we resolved to buy a loaf and some cheese, of which we ate, when hungry, under a tree; and, as the season was the middle of summer, we determined to sleep under hedges or in any out-houses we might meet with, thus to avoid the unnecessary expense of entering inns on the road.

“Necessity reconciles measures, which, to those who have never been reduced to adopt them, appear insurmountable; thus we experienced nothing more than accidental inconvenience from pursuing our plan. In the enjoyment of liberty I ever forgot care; and Jacques never failed to declare once every day, that he had rather

sleep in a ditch with mud for a feather-bed, than on down in the Bastile.

"Journeying on one night by moonlight, the decayed castle wherein you, Lauretta, was an unfortunate prisoner, attracted our notice: its ruined condition seemed to bespeak it uninhabited; the gate stood open; we entered the hall, and without much farther observation, we determined to make it our abode for the night.

"We lay down together in a corner of the hall, where we had scarcely composed ourselves to sleep, when the sounding of a shrill tucket aroused our attention. — We listened without speaking: — In a couple of minutes a man entered the hall from a distant part of the building, and proceeding to the gate, called out, 'All's safe.' Immedi-

ately we heard the trampling of horses approaching close to the gate; a number of men, who were talking confusedly, dismounted from them and entered the hall; and the first sentence I distinctly heard, and which opened to me at once the nature of this strange adventure, was, ‘curse the barrenness of the road! one can find nobody to plunder,’ uttered by one of the men as he vaulted from his horse.

“Presently another man entered the hall from the interior part of the building, carrying a lamp: in an instant Jacques sprung from my side, and running to the man, threw his arms around his neck, exclaiming, ‘*Ah mon frère, je vous retrouve! Ah mon cher frère! mon cher frère!*’”

“In his eagerness to embrace his bro-

ther, Jacques had knocked the lamp out of his hand, which being extinguished by the fall, the party was left in darkness to exercise their imaginations on what they had heard; and, from what motive I cannot pretend to say, whether from surprise or any supernatural fear, a general silence prevailed till another light was brought into the hall; on the appearance of which, Jacques, regardless of surrounding objects, came running back to me, all the way introducing me to his brother as his *très bon ami.*

“ The banditti, for such, you will have perceived, were the inhabitants of this decayed mansion, immediately came round me; I rose and began to apologise for our intrusion into their dwelling, by stating to them the truth of our circumstances, which Jacques summed up by telling them we

were almost pennyless, having just escaped from the Bastile.

“ Avowed enemies to tyranny, and plainly perceiving there was no deceit in the relationship of the brothers, the banditti invited us to enter that part of the building which they inhabited, and partake of their supper before we retired to rest, when we should be accommodated with a bed.

“ I thanked them for their kindness in the warmest terms, and they conducted us into a hall where a repast had been prepared against their return. I ate in complaisance to my entertainers,—and Jacques, because variety, to which he was unaccustomed, whetted his appetite.

“ After supper I was requested to relate

my adventures, Jacques having awakened their curiosity by repeatedly referring to our late escape; and though I should have preferred retiring to sleep, I felt myself bound to comply with their request.

“ When I had concluded my story, the leader rose, and taking my hand, — ‘ We are your brothers in affliction,’ he said; ‘ most of us whom you here behold, have been driven from the haunts of men, by the cruelty of man; but there is not one of us whose heart has been steeled by his misfortunes into inhumanity: never has the traveller whom we have plundered borne the marks of our violence, — never have we left the poor man destitute, — the rich and profligate alone have been our prey, — the unfortunate at all times our care; — you are unfortunate, and we are willing to receive

you as a brother; will you then become one of us, and live free from the despotism of tyrants, and the malice of an envious world, enjoying perfect liberty, subject only to laws of our own, and those useless where honour presides ?'

" ' Well said, noble captain !' cried Jacques, starting up : ' honour amongst thieves is an old proverb of my father's : I'll make one of you with all my heart.'

" During the time I had been reciting my adventures, Jacques had been drinking pretty freely of the palatable wine the table afforded; and having taken somewhat too potent a dose, it was rather the spirit of the wine than that of his own courage which spoke for him in the last sentence. The captain perceived his situation, and com-

manded his brother to conduct him to bed ; but he promised faithfully not to drink another drop, or speak another word, if he might but be permitted to sit up as long as his '*cher maître*.'

“ During this little altercation between the captain and Jacques, I had a moment of leisure to reflect on the words which had been addressed to me ; I thought they appeared rather an apology for a mode of life which the speaker himself knew to be culpable, but was from necessity constrained to follow, than an eulogium which might tempt me to embrace it : I accordingly requested that I might deliberate on his proposal till the morning ; a request readily granted me : Jacques and I then retired for the night, — Jacques assuring the captain he had resolved to serve under him.

“ A few moments served to change the powers of the deceitful liquor which had produced Jacques’s valour; for he was no sooner in bed than his boasted prowess was forgotten in a profound sleep, and I thus left to my own reflections.

“ During the greatest part of the night I remained awake, undecided what plan to follow. My mind revolted from becoming a determined robber; but I felt a still greater antipathy to again mixing in the ensnaring scenes of that world from which I had already experienced so much perfidy and sorrow; and I at length resolved to accept the asylum which had been offered me.

“ In the morning when Jacques awoke, all the occurrences of the preceding night had entirely fled from his memory; and he

awoke me in a great fright, inquiring whether we had got into the Bastile again. Just as I had sufficiently roused myself to begin to rally his recollection, his brother entered to call us to breakfast, and his presence saved me the trouble of farther explanation, as, on sight of him, Jacques immediately recollected where he was.

"On seeing the captain, I immediately declared to him my resolution; and was welcomed by him into my new situation, as also separately by every voice of the community.

"The captain then turned to Jacques, and reminded him of his promise.

"Jacques stared vacantly, and inquired, 'what it was?'

“To become one of the fraternity over which I have the honour to preside,” returned the leader.

“Did I promise that?”

“You did.”

“Well then, I’ll keep my word; and if you will but feed me and clothe me, I’ll be *savetier* to you all for nothing; and what more can you desire of me, if you will but consider that a cobbler ought to stick to his last?”

“His brother joined me in interceding for the grant of his petition; and his native mirth, rather than any other qualification, obtained for him the majority of votes in his favour.”

CHAP. XX.

————— Yes, yes —'tis she!

This little cross—I know it by sure marks!

AARON HILL.

“ON the preceding night, the faces of such of the banditti as had been out prowling, had been disguised with some colouring, which was always their custom when going on any expedition; and being now cleared from it, Jacques recognised, in the person of Kroonzer, the man with whom his brother had left France, of which occurrence this was the brief account: Kroonzer was the son of a German man and French woman; his residence had been chiefly in France, and his trade, from his infancy, none of the most

creditable; his parents having been people, who, by assuming various disguises and characters in various places, had made these their means of imposing on the credulous, and defrauding the ignorant; thus gaining a fortuitous subsistence, whilst they cautiously kept within the pale of the law, and yet were in reality little better than common thieves.

“This mode of life had initiated Kroonzer into all the intrigues of Paris; and from his first herding with the banditti, to whose knowledge he had been led by accident, he had become extremely useful to them, by going annually into France, and finding means of disposing to advantage of such rings, watches, and other trinkets of value, as had fallen into their hands, and, before their knowledge of Kroonzer, had proved of little worth to them, as no one amongst

them had ventured to hazard the experiment of changing them into money.

"It was in one of these expeditions that Kroonzer became acquainted with Jacques's brother; and having found him to be a man whom he believed would be a valuable acquisition to their society, he had enticed him into Germany under false promises, nor made the real truth known to him till he introduced him to his comrades; a measure which he had however been strictly forbidden by the captain ever again to repeat. Guillaume Perlet was, as it fortunately happened for the security of the banditti, an acceptable subject; for, preferring any kind of idleness to work, his new mode of life was pleasing to him the first moment of his being made acquainted with it.

“The captain treated me with great kindness and attention, and indeed my health required it, for the sudden change from eleven years of inactivity, to the great fatigue I had the last twenty days been undergoing, had reduced me to a state of excessive weakness.

“For the first year, I was not required to do any thing more in the various business of our household, of which every one in his turn took a part, than what I chose for my own amusement; nor during the whole of the time I lived amongst the banditti, in all nearly eight years, was any thing more asked of me than to take my turn in the evening and nightly watches.

“The evening watch was to answer the rucket sounded by the banditti, on their re-

turn from an excursion, that, in case of the officers of justice having entered their haunt during their absence, they might thus be apprised of it, ere they entered the castle, and, by flying, prevent their being taken with their spoils upon them, which would prove sure evidences of their guilt.

“Of the night watch this was the import; that those who did not go out in the quest of plunder watched for two hours alternately in the hall of the castle, that the fraternity might not be surprised in their sleep.

“During the first six years of my residence amongst the banditti, no circumstance worth relating occurred; and as I was not constrained to act the part of a plunderer, considering myself comparatively free from

guilt, I felt myself tolerably happy: at the expiration of that period the captain died.

"A ballot immediately took place for appointing him a successor, and the majority of suffrages fell upon Kroonzer.

"About three months after his becoming leader of the fraternity, was the time at which he had always been accustomed to visit France; and as no one was deemed so fit for the business of that expedition as himself, he again undertook to perform it, notwithstanding his rise to his present situation; and accordingly, having appointed a deputy to guide the helm until his return, he departed as usual.

"The time of his absence was marked with an event of some moment: this was the

death of Guillaume Perlet; and for some weeks it required all my most eloquent persuasions and remonstrances to keep Jacques from exceeding the bounds of reasonable sorrow on the loss of his brother; and he declared, that the thought of leaving me alone in my present situation, was his only inducement to struggle against death.

“At the stated time Kroonzer returned, and with him came the chevalier D'Aignon.

“Kroonzer had one fault,—it was that inordinate thirst of money which often leads its possessor to gratify in a heedless moment his ruling passion, and to repent at leisure that he did not subdue it. Conscious that he had acted wrongly, and yet too honourable to attempt a deceit which might endanger the security of those to whom the strongest

ties of fellowship connected him,—when Theodore had retired for the night (for no one has a right to question the captain, and thus we knew not yet on what motive Theodore was brought amongst us), he candidly confessed the inconsiderate measure of which he had been guilty, and asked our advice how to act.

“He informed us, that during his visits to Paris, he had been much in the habit of frequenting gaming-tables, at many of which he had for the last three years frequently seen the chevalier, and had at times, he said, won of him sums of money to no small amount.—‘He always paid his money without concern, and was so eager to enter into any measure for squandering it,’ continued Kroonzer, ‘that I soon found him to be a fit subject to exercise my talents

upon. No very favourable opportunity offered to forward my plans on him, till a few days ago, happening to meet him at a tavern where he was engaged at dice with a young nobleman, and a dispute arising between them, and swords being called in to adjust their quarrel, the young man fell by the hand of the chevalier: his rage was now lost in fear for his own safety, and he exclaimed madly, that he was lost, ruined, and a dead man. I was the only one in the room with them; and approaching him, I told him if he would sign a draft for five hundred louis-d'ors, which I drew from my pocket, I would insure his safety: he immediately acquiesced, and I gloried in my success, till the reflection of a few moments told me how wrongly I had been acting, since I had no other means of securing him but by bringing him hither; and I could not steel my

heart into being the villain to desert him, now he had paid me so liberally for his protection; I accordingly effected his escape, and I have secured my reward: but how shall we secure our own safety?

“At length it was agreed that Theodore should take an oath, by which he imprecated vengeance on himself if ever he betrayed us, or our haunt; and that we each separately, in his presence, should bind ourselves by a solemn vow, to seek his life, if ever he was known, by the slightest insinuation, to disregard the oath by which he was restricted.

“He willingly agreed to this proposal, probably foreseeing that a refusal would have caused him to have been retained a prisoner amongst us for life; a plan which

was first suggested by one of the banditti, but which Kroonzer feared to adopt, knowing that if by any means the haunt should be detected by the officers of justice, the finding a man of rank imprisoned in it, would be an unfurmountable evidence against them on their trial.

“A short time after, on the promise of three hundred louis-d’ors from the chevalier, in addition to the sum Kroonzer had already received, he again set out for Paris, in order to gain intelligence of Theodore’s antagonist; and on his return, brought information that the wound had not proved mortal, and that the young nobleman was in a fair way of recovery.

“Theodore immediately left us, and we heard no more of him till three days before

your being brought to the decayed castle. It was one night about this time, that the man who held the night watch gave the alarm, having seen, as he said, a man on horseback riding amongst the ruins: the banditti, to whom every unknown person wore the dread appearance of a spy, or officer of justice, immediately prepared themselves for defence; but a few minutes eased their doubts, by their hearing the voice of the chevalier in the hall of the castle.

“Kroonzer then first lamented that he had not interdicted to him their haunt; but still a prey to interest, he again consented to serve him, and Theodore departed before day-break.

“On his departure, Kroonzer informed us that Theodore had bought him, by one

thousand louis-d'ors, to secrete in the castle his sister, who, he said, had formed an engagement with a man much her inferior in life, and which he meant to prevent from taking place, by immuring her in a convent, when he had found one suited to his wishes; but should in the mean time leave her with us, judging it expedient immediately to carry her away from her paramour.

“Kroonzer had promised to fetch this supposed sister, whom he had been told to treat with the greatest kindness, and requested me to be his companion in the expedition.

“The story told by Theodore had appeared to me plausible, and his conduct by no means improper: I accordingly consented, and another of the banditti was chosen

to attend us; and at the appointed time, having disguised ourselves, we set out on our journey in an old carriage which had been left in the castle before any of the banditti had known it, and in which we carried provision to supply us on our journey.

“ We stopped only twice for a short space of time; the first inn Kroonzer did not like, being in too public a situation: accordingly we proceeded to the cottage where you remained an entire day, and bargained with its owner for our admittance on our return, for he had already been cautioned by Theodore against travelling in the day: — as to the second inn, as he proposed staying at it only a short time on his return, and that in the dead of the night, he paid little attention to its situation.

“We proceeded to the spot where Kroonzer had agreed to meet the chevalier ; a tap at the window was the signal to the little girl who attended you to give the alarm of fire, and then open the door to the chevalier under the pretence of running out to call for assistance ; we entered, and when you fainted in our arms, we immediately carried you to the vehicle by which our companion was waiting for us at a short distance from your cottage ; he entered it with you, and Kroonzer and myself mounted the horses and drove on.

“Your dress, and the cottage in which we found you, so ill suited to the character of the chevalier’s sister, first raised suspicions in us of the truth of what Theodore had told us ; but he laughed at our scruples, and explained them away, though I must confess

not very satisfactorily either to Kroonzer or myself.

“At the little inn where we first stopped, a plausible story, told by Kroonzer, lulled the curiosity awakened in the host and his guests by our appearance; and at the retired cottage of old Barthä we did not think it necessary to render any account of our actions.”

Lauretta could not here forbear interrupting her father to inquire, why Kroonzer, since he had no design upon her life, had drawn his sword, on her supplicating the pity of him who had been her companion in the carriage?

Count Byroff informed her, that it had been drawn by him as a tacit threat to his

companion, to prevent his informing her of her destination, which had been particularly forbidden by the chevalier, and which he had not yet had an opportunity of imparting to his comrade.

"After we left this inn," continued the count, "we became your companions; and our comrade, the driver, having fastened our third horse to the back of the vehicle, and being arrived at Bartha's cottage, we sent our companion forward upon it to the castle to prepare for your reception, which had been forgotten by Kroonzer in the hurry of his setting out.

"The vehicle so long disused had been so shattered by the journey, the greatest part of which lay, as you must have remarked, over uneven ground, that we thought it un-

safe to proceed farther in it; and accordingly, whilst you were in the cottage, we carried it into the middle of a neighbouring wood, where we left it, and returned with the horses to the cottage:—our journey from thence to the castle I need not repeat.”

“It was doubtless, then,” said Lauretta, “one of the banditti whom I saw enter a door in the hall of the castle, and whose appearance so much alarmed me, from my conjecturing him to have been Theodore?”

“It was,” replied the count; “he knew not that we were returned, and having unguardedly entered the hall, made a precipitate retreat on seeing us; for we had determined, if possible, not to let you suppose the castle inhabited; that in case of your escaping from us, or hereafter, by any means,

mixing again with the world, you might have no clue for suspecting those on whom your anger would have fallen to be concealed in a nest of deserted ruins."

"Who were those persons that approached my prison door on the second night of my confinement?" asked Lauretta.

"Some of the banditti," answered count Byroff, "who having been out for nearly three days on an expedition of plunder, knew not where you were lodged, and were proceeding to hide what they had acquired in a secret closet in the apartment where you were confined, but were immediately recalled by Kroonzer."

Thus was the perplexing mystery of Theodore's villany, and Lauretta's fears, ex-

plained away. Laretta heard it all with wonder and secret satisfaction at the evils she had escaped. Count Byroff paused in silence, while his daughter offered up a short but heart-dictated thanksgiving to the power who had given her fortitude to bear up under her sufferings, and rewarded her confidence in him by his benign interposition: he then proceeded to inform her, how he had discovered her to be his child.

“ You must recollect, that on your recovering from the swoon into which you fell in the hall of the castle, and finding yourself on the bed in the prison, you supplicated my protection: it was at that moment that your voice and features struck me, as bearing a strong resemblance to those of your deceased mother, when, on the last night I ever beheld her, she upbraided me with be-

ing the supposed murderer of count Frederic Cohenburg ; but not knowing that she had ever borne a child, I could only wonder at so strong a resemblance between two persons whom I could not for an instant suppose to be connected by the most distant ties of blood, and I endeavoured to forget it.

“ Kroonzer took upon himself the office of attending you ; I wished it had been assigned to me ; but as I could give no reason that would have appeared satisfactory to the banditti for asking to share it with him, I forebore to express my thoughts.

“ On the morning of your escape from the castle, through the chasm in the wall of your prison made by the lightning, I was the first who discovered that you were gone.”

Lauretta here interrupted her father, to remark to Alphonfus her providential escape with life in falling from so great a height; but count Byroff, smiling at the miraculous deliverance which she imagined she had experienced, explained to her, “that at that end of the castle which was inhabited by the banditti, stood seven towers, which rose gradually above each other, and that she had been confined in the lowest of these, the floor of which was not above three feet raised from the ground.

“None of the banditti in the retired parts of the building heard the falling of the wall: the one who had the watch in the hall of the castle heard the rumbling of falling stones, but it was so customary a sound amongst those decayed walls, which continually were

crumbling on every slight shock of the weather, that he did not attend to it.

“Morning was far advanced, when passing by the turret in a short ramble I was taking for the benefit of the air, I perceived what had occurred; and entering to look whether you were still there, though I was well convinced I could not expect to find you, the cross which is now on your neck, and which from the figures carved upon it, I instantly recollected to be that I had given your mother, caught my eye, and so forcibly did this circumstance strengthen my belief, that I had not been deceived in imagining that I had discovered in you a likeness to my lost Laurretta, that I no longer hesitated to pronounce you her daughter, and count Frederic Cohenburg your father.

"Convinced as I now was that you was the offspring of my lost wife, and conscious that she could not have been a sufficient time from me to have borne a son of Theodore's age, even if his name, and Kroonzer's knowledge of his family, had not baffled the supposition, I immediately again began to doubt the veracity of the tale Theodore had related concerning you, but resolved to conceal my thoughts till Theodore's future conduct should elucidate the truth of this mystery; I accordingly concealed the cross in my bosom, and proceeded to inform Kroonzer of your escape.

"Kroonzer heard my intelligence with sorrow, and alarm for the community, upon whom his temerity in introducing Theodore to a knowledge of their haunt, might bring the worst of consequences, provided you

were not regained, and Theodore took measures of vengeance against Kroonzer for his negligence, as he might deem it, in suffering you to escape.

“Horsemen were immediately sent out in pursuit of you, but no success attended their endeavours: the following evening Theodore arrived; disappointment rendered him almost frantic, and he himself went in search of you, still solemnly vowing you were his sister.

“Thus passed on several days, the banditti continually going out by turns in pursuit of you, and again returning unsuccessful to receive fresh orders from Kroonzer or Theodore, one of whom remained constantly at the castle.

“At length one of the banditti, who had been out disguised, brought intelligence, that a peasant whom he had questioned, had told him, that on the very day you had escaped from the castle he had seen the old hermit, who lived on the skirts of the forest, leading a female to his cell.

“Theodore had before this commanded the most secure place about the castle to be prepared for your reception, in case you should be retaken by him; and Kroonzer had prepared what was by the banditti called the cavern, and to which there was a communication from an apartment in the castle; accordingly having learned that it was in readiness to receive you, he took one of the banditti, and as all the horses were out with others of the fraternity on an expedition of plunder, set out on foot towards the hermitage.

“ I resolved at once, if practicable, to ease my doubts, by informing myself whether you had any knowledge of my deceased wife ; I accordingly followed them, and having stationed myself amidst some trees, close by which I knew they must pass in their return to the castle, provided they found you in the hermitage, I resolved at all risques to pronounce the name of my wife, supposing that if you had any knowledge of her, you must of course be acquainted with her name, and would on thus unexpectedly hearing it, utter some exclamation, from which I might gather what I so earnestly wished to learn ; determining, if you were, the child of my Lauretta, to befriend you for the sake of the love I had once borne her.

“ Your answer thrilled my heart ; it recalled to me more forcibly than before the recollection of her I had lost. Whilst

Theodore was questioning you, I gained a stand opposite to the spot whence I had spoken to you, and when he rushed to the place from which the sound of my voice had proceeded, I rescued you from his accomplice, and then conducted you to the cavern, which, as having been the place mentioned by Theodore himself, I thought least likely for him to suppose to be your present place of concealment, as he would imagine you taken from him almost by supernatural means.

“ Without any suspicion of my having been absent, I arrived at the castle some time before Theodore, who had been delayed by the assistance he had been obliged to give to his companion before he could restore him to his senses: I grieved that I had so hardly used one who had never injured, or

even offended me ; but it was my only method of rescuing you, undiscovered ; and the anxiety of the moment would, I fear, had necessity required it, have tempted me to have done more ; I thank heaven that it did not.

“ The dagger which you doubtless beheld on the table, I left you as a safeguard against the violence of Theodore, should he by any means have discovered your retreat, and have assailed your person.

“ I had the watch that night ; trembling I flew to you, and I returned hardly able to contain my joy, that I had preserved, un hoped for, unexpected, my own daughter !

“ Again Theodore and the banditti scour

ed the country in search of you, and horrid was the vengeance Theodore denounced against your protectors.

“ I ventured no more to visit you till I again held the watch, against which night I had prepared for our escape, which the eye of providence, regardless of suffering innocence, prospered with its blessing.

“ I durst not impart to the banditti the discovery I had made, lest they should refuse their consent to my leaving them ; and the alarm I yesterday testified during our day's journey, proceeded from my fear of their overtaking me, and separating me for ever from you ; as Kroonzer yesterday morning, when he departed after the death of Theodore, refusing to hear me, bad me beware the vengeance due to a traitor. But,” con-

tinued the count, "we will seek some retired spot where the secrecy to which my own safety at present enjoins me, will, I trust, be my safeguard against the threatened danger."

Here ended the eventful history of count Byroff, who, with the tear of parental affection starting in his eye, declared his sufferings overpaid by their having led him at last to find an angel he knew not to have been created; to whom he was bound by the most tender ties of nature, and in whose smiles and endearments he might forget to reflect on past calamities.

CHAP. XXI.

Let me be your servant:

* * * * *

I will follow thee,

To the last gasp, with truth and loyalty.

AS YOU LIKE IT.

DURING the day our travellers continued to advance on their journey, and when towards evening they again stopped for the night, Alphonfus confessed himself so ill, as to be immediately obliged to retire to bed.

The exertions of body together with the coldness of the air on the night of his leaving Smaldart castle, in conjunction with the precipitate and violent changes from grief to joy which his mind had been lately un-

dergoing, added to his endeavours for the last day and night of concealing that he was otherwise than well, in order to expedite their journey, and the safety of his Lauretta's father, had reduced him to a state of great danger; his fever was returning with increased violence, and with less strength on his part to combat against its attacks.

Such medical assistance as the village afforded, count Byroff made it his immediate business to procure: Lauretta and her father watched over him during the night, and the morning brought with it increased symptoms of danger.

Till the fifth day the violence of his fever had abated only for short intervals, and the physician had given but slender hopes of his recovery: he now pronounced his patient

free from danger, at the same time warning the count and Laurretta, against any indulgence which might endanger a relapse.

Laurretta had hitherto been the constant nurse of her husband, inasmuch that count Byroff, moved by her entreaties to suffer her to remain with him she most loved, had, with no little alarm for her own safety, now seen her pass five nights without sleep, and an equal number of days without having retired above two hours together from her husband's chamber, which she had always passed rather in prayers for his amendment, than in attempts to enjoy that repose of which she stood so much in need for the preservation of her own health. On the pleasing change however in the fate of Alphonfus, he had rather commanded than prevailed with her to retire regularly for the

night, having promised to be himself the nurse of Alphonfus during her slumbers ; and if any material change took place in him, to bring her immediate intelligence of it.

Lauretta had not been long retired, when Alphonfus requiring some drink which was preparing by the hostess, the count went down to fetch it : as he was descending the stairs, he heard a confused noise of talking and laughing, which ceasing at momentary intervals, rendered audible the voice of a person whose lamentations seemed to produce the laughter of the hearers, and the words, "*que le diable m'emporte*, if I would not give all I am worth to be dead," followed by an ill restrained cry of the speaker, and a laugh, exaggerated beyond their feelings, on the part of the audience, brought

him to the door of the kitchen. His attention, excited by what he had heard, was converted into no less astonishment, when, on his entering, a man, whose features the dim lamp hanging over the chimney had not at first suffered him to see distinctly, rising from his seat, and dropping from his hand a pot of wine, which he was just lifting to his mouth, ran up to him, and falling on his knees before him, clasped his arms round him, and exclaimed, "*Où, vous voilà ! vous voilà !*" he recognised the person of Jacques Perlet.—"He is crazy, he is mad," called out two or three of the by-standers, and again a loud laugh burst from every mouth.

Joy for some moments suspended the utterance of Jacques, and surprise that of the count; which silence the host misconstruing on the part of the count, advanced to rid

him of his troublesome detainer, and for that purpose, seized with both his hands Jacques's left arm; this rough handling first recalled Jacques to his recollection, and immediately springing on his feet, he levelled a blow at the host for attempting to tear him from the count, which, had not the count arrested his arm, and thus prevented its full execution, might have proved of fatal consequences to the unwarranted interferer.

Those who laugh irrationally at trifles, laugh equally whoever is the cause; thus the whole merriment of the kitchen was now turned against the precipitately retreating landlord; but as ridicule has often produced valour in a breast which nature never implanted in it, the landlord, with a countenance which seemed in return for this rail-
lery to wish every one present in his situa-

tion, with exactly his feelings (by no means a slender punishment), was advancing to the combat, when the count stepping between the combatants, explained in as few words as he could convey his meaning in, that the offender was a person in whom he felt interest, and that he wished the dispute to cease.

A smaller plea would have quieted the fury of the host; and all Jacques wished for, was a moment for testifying the joy and triumph he felt at again finding the count, which he did by a loud huzza, and exclaiming "that the count was the only good man ever created, except his own father, who was dead."

The confusion of fists being ended, the confusion of tongues ensued; Jacques stood on one side of the count, exclaiming inco-

herently, "Ah, *monfieur*, how could you run away and not take me with you? I am fure I would have been faithful to you: you know I would. — I would not have ftaid there without you for all the world; it was worfe than the *maudite Baftile*:— well, *Dieu merci*, I have found you now, and if ever I leave you again, I wifh my uncle and Kroonzer may both catch me the next minute."—On the other fide flood the hofit, who, regardless of Jacques's ejaculation, contended to relate, that Jacques had arrived there on foot about two hours before, that he had inquired for a perfon, by whom the hofit now found him to have meant the count, whose drefs he could not describe, and with whom he had fometimes faid he expected to find a lady; fometimes a lady and a young man, and fometimes that he was alone; in fhort, that he had talked fo inconfiftently, and fo much in

French, that they had not understood above half what he said, only that he had often mentioned the Bastile; that they at last conjectured him to be mad, and when the count entered, he confessed they had been amusing themselves at his expense, till he had wept for vexation; added to this, the hostesses, whose voice was none of the softest, was continually interlarding her husband's story with her own emendations and additions, and no one else in the kitchen desisted from giving their own opinion, whether it was attended to or not.

The count seized the first moment of silence, which many attempts to articulate at length gained him from that part of his audience by which he wished to be heard, to announce to the host and hostess that Jacques was a person for whom he entertained a

warm friendship, and to desire that he might be accommodated to his ease, making himself answerable for the charge: he then turned to Jacques, and having easily convinced him that he was under the necessity of leaving him to watch over a sick friend, and with a caution to be careful what he said, and promising to see him early in the morning, he returned to the chamber of Alphonfus with the drink he had left it to procure.

Count Byroff was far from being displeased at so unexpectedly again meeting with Jacques Perlet; he knew him to be faithfully attached to him, and promised himself that he would be a useful companion on their intended journey: that Jacques had contrived to escape from the banditti, after having effected it from the Bastile, could not much excite his wonder; but what chance

had fortunately conducted him to the spot where he now was, his curiosity was raised to learn.

At an early hour Laretta returned to the chamber of her husband; she found him fallen into a soft slumber: the count stole silently out of the room, and left his daughter to the willing task of watching over her Alphonfus.

Early as the hour was, Jacques was risen, and the count descending, found him waiting his arrival, seated on a bench without the door of the little inn, where he was practising his trade on his own shoes, which were a good deal the worse for the journey they had performed.

On seeing the count, he sprang from his

feat, and shaking him by the hand with both his, reiterated his joy at their fortunate meeting: the count in return acknowledged the pleasure it gave him, and having told Jacques to resume his feat, and placed himself by his side, he began to inquire what accident had brought him to that spot.

“No accident at all, *monfieur*,” replied Jacques, “but chance; as soon as I had got away from that old castle full of robbers, I resolved to walk all over the empire; and ask every body I met after you, till I found you; and you fee, *monfieur*, what good fortune I have had, *graces à Dieu*; and I hope you wo’n’t fend me away from you now, *monfieur*.”

The count immediately eafed his doubts on this head, and then proceeded to inform

him of the occasion of his having left the banditti, and also gave him the outlines of such occurrences as had befallen him since their last meeting.

“ Well, *monseigneur*, and how do you think I got away from them ?” cried Jacques, in return to the count’s narrative.

“ I know you have a ready invention,” returned count Byroff, “ but cannot possibly presume to guess in what manner you exercised it in effecting your escape.”

“ Then I’ll tell you, *monseigneur* : — when Kroonzer came back at night, and told us of Theodore’s death, and that the lady was your daughter, some said one thing of you, and some another ; however they all agreed that it was natural enough for you to go

with your child, and that they believed you were too much a man of honour to betray them, after they had been so kind to you; so they resolved not to seek after you, or to hurt you, if you again fell into their hands. Well, *monfieur*, when I heard you were gone, I had a ftrange inclination to be gone too; but I durft not ask, for I thought perhaps they might not put fo much truft in me as a man of honour, as they did in you, and would keep fuch a tight watch over me, that I might never get away from them at all; fo I only pretended to cry, and be very unhappy, becaufe I might never fee you again; and I declared, that if you did not [come back next day, I would kill myfelf: they only laughed at me, but, however, I knew what I was doing, and did not mind them a ftraw; next day I was quite melancholy, and at night they asked me, whether

I would keep my word ; I did not answer them, but went and threw myself on my bed, drest as I was : when they were all asleep, I got up, and running past the man who had the watch in the hall, I made for the muddy pond on the west side of the castle, and having thrown in a great stone, a hat, and handkerchief, I climbed up, like a cat, into the top of the old willow that stands on its margin ; presently several of the banditti came and dragged for me in the pond ; the hat which they saw left them no room to doubt that I had thrown myself in, and not finding my body after some time searching, they concluded me sunk into the mud and smothered, and away they went neither pleased nor sorry at what had happened : when they were gone I came down from the tree, and ever since, *monfieur*, I

have been wandering about, I hardly know where."

The physician arriving to attend his patient put an end to their conversation, as count Byroff rose to accompany him to the chamber of Alphonfus.

In the course of the day Jacques was introduced to the knowledge of Alphonfus and Lauretta, the former of whom received him as graciously as his situation would permit; the latter, in a transport of gratitude, as the sole means of her having ever known a father.

Alphonfus continued rapidly to regain his health and strength, and at the expiration of ten other days the physician pronounced him

able to recommence his journey; our travellers accordingly, with the addition of Jacques to their former party, again set forward on their route, and no occurrence worthy of notice happened till their arrival at a solitary inn, which was situated in the road between Cohenburg castle, and the mansion of count Frederic, and about a league distant from each.

CHAP. XXII.

How many things are there that the fancy makes terrible by night, which the day turns into ridicule !

SENECA'S MORALS.

FORTUNATELY for Alphonfus, who wished not to be known, the little inn had changed its inhabitants since he had last visited it ; thus no suspicion of their being any other than common travellers was entertained by the landlord when they entered his dwelling.

Shortly after their arrival Alphonfus took occasion to lead to the subject on which his thoughts were unremittingly bent.

"That's a fine castle that stands about a league from hence," said he, addressing his host.

"Yes, sir," was the answer.

"Who inhabits it?"

"Nobody."

"To whom does it belong?"

"To the Cohenburg family."

"And why do they not reside in it?"

"Ah, sir! they are all dead but one poor gentleman, the brother of him that used to live there, and he can no where find rest for his guilty mind: folks say he is gone into a

monastery to repent of his sins, and make his peace with heaven."

"Of what crime is he accused?"

"Why, sir, I have not lived here long, but as I have heard people say, count Frederic, the youngest brother, he that I now speak of, and who used to live in a handsome mansion about a league from hence to the left, and which is now inhabited by one count Radvelt, was so jealous of his brother's castle and riches, that he had him murdered by assassins in the Wolf's Wood, in his return home to his castle, from Vienna; and then killed his brother's wife and son with his own hand. The matter was pretty well hushed up at first; it was given out that the countess had died of grief for the loss of her husband, and that her son had killed himself in

a fit of madness: nobody much believed it, but as nobody had any proofs to the contrary, nothing durst be said; but the villain soon betrayed himself, for he staid at the castle but two or three days, and then went no one knows whither."

"And did he leave nobody in the castle?"

"No, sir, nobody; people do tell strange stories that it is haunted, and that he was frightened away by the ghost of the murdered count; and some say, that a bell is tolled by it every night at midnight."

"I have a strange curiosity to visit this castle."

"You had better not, sir."

“Why so, friend?”

“Why, fir, people think that the reason of the ghost's ringing the bell is, that it is shut up by priestcraft within the walls of the castle, and prevented from coming out; and that it tolls the bell to call somebody in, that it may reveal the murder of its body to them, and frighten them into promising to revenge its death. Nobody goes near the castle on that account.”

Alphonfus pretended to smile at the tale related by his host, but it had an effect on his feelings which he could ill conceal: all his efforts to coerce the wish of immediately gratifying his curiosity he found to be in vain, and he declared to the count and Lauretta, that he felt an impulse he could not

resist, to certify himself that night as to the tolling of the bell: in vain did they remonstrate, and endeavour to prevail with him not to leave the inn until the morning; but there was a resolute and anxious wildness in his countenance to follow the impulse he had described, which seemed to bid defiance to every objection.

The tears however of Laretta, whose alarm was raised, she could hardly express on what account, to a pitch of agony, at the idea of Alphonfus that night approaching the castle, brought him to consent to defer his visit to the following day, on condition that if he could gain no light on the mystery which occupied his mind by traversing the castle, and examining his father's cabinet, she would not object to their there taking

up their abode, which he declared would be an alleviation of his sorrows and perplexities.

After a sleepless night, Alphonfus rose to an uneasy morn; every the most minute circumstance attendant on the mystery wherein his happiness was involved, had been turned over in his thoughts during the night; and as heretofore, instead of deriving any clue of elucidation from reflection, the mystery had only thickened upon increased conjecture.

Again he felt scruples arising in his mind against opposing the injunction laid on him by his mother: again his doubts were lulled by the secrecy he had vowed to maintain, relative to any discovery he might make in the castle, which, notwithstanding the strong

impulse he felt to visit it, reason seemed to contradict he should do; and then again he felt a momentary fear, for which he shuddered to account, that a snare might be spread for taking away his life if he returned to the castle.

Judging it however most consistent with the faith he owed himself to go alone to the castle, he avowed his intention to his Lauretta, and resigning her after a fond embrace to the care of her father till his return, he departed, followed by the eyes of Lauretta till the intervening branches of the trees shut him from her sight.

Alphonfus rode swiftly forward, lost in a maze of fluctuating thought; at length taking a turn of the well-known road, Cohenburg castle burst full upon his sight; he be-

held it with mingled sensations of melancholy pleasure, and awful apprehension. Crossing the moat, he proceeded to the stable from whence he had taken his steed on the morning on which he had last departed from the castle: fond remembrance was hasty to contrast the present gloom of desertion with former scenes of happier aspect; — recollection became too painful to be constrained, and burst its way from his eyes in burning drops of sorrow.

Having left his steed in the stable, he proceeded to the castle-gate; it was locked, and bade defiance to his repeated efforts to open it: he next attempted the postern-gate, it in like manner resisted his endeavours. He ran round the castle, gazing upon it in every part, and trying to recollect some window by which he might effect his

entrance ; he would not trust to recollection for believing them all too high, and too strongly barricaded to favour his attempts, but examined every one separately in the circuit of the castle.

Tortured by having his attempts thus baffled, he threw himself upon the ground in despair ; in a few minutes, however, recollecting that inactivity could add little to forward his wishes, he rose from his situation, resolving to return to the inn, and ask advice of count Byroff how to proceed in his present dilemma. Once again he exerted his utmost endeavours to open the two gates, but they proved equally vain with his former efforts ; he mounted his steed and returned to the inn.

Alphonfus immediately related his adven-

ture, and opened a consultation with the count, on what steps were the best to be taken by him.

“Much deliberation,” the count said, “seemed to be required on a subject of so delicate a nature: the gates of the castle being locked might be construed into an indication either of its being inhabited, or not being inhabited. If it was inhabited, the prevalent idea of its being deserted plainly proved it was the shelter of some person who wished to live in obscurity, and would, from this motive, perhaps, revenge the entrance of any one who dared to trespass on his retirement.”

“How can he wish to live unknown?” cried Alphonfus, “who every night publicly announces his dwelling by tolling the castle bell?”

"Have you any proof of this?" said the count.

"The young miner, and now again our landlord, both assert that it is so."

"But they never heard it; nor likely any one who trembles while he relates it, has any authority for it but the dream of some old woman, who having talked all day of the occurrences at the castle, had seen them in her sleep in aggravated colours."

"I will certify myself in this point," returned Alphonfus, "before I proceed to any measures for entering the castle; I will watch the tolling of the bell this night."

After promising Laupetta that he would use no means for entering the castle that

night, she consented that he should watch on the outside, in order to learn the truth of the story which had been related of the midnight bell, provided her father accompanied him; but as Alphonfus declared that he could not leave her at the inn with satisfaction to himself, unless the count remained with her, it was at length agreed that Jacques Perlet should be the companion of Alphonfus on his nightly expedition.

As Alphonfus was well aware that his going out in the night could not fail being known by the host, and excite his curiosity, he determined to inform him, that he meant to go and listen for the tolling of the singular bell he had mentioned to be sounded every night at the castle; the host, unsuspecting that Alphonfus meant more than his words conveyed, endeavoured to dissuade him from

his purpose by all the arguments of blind superstition, and vulgar fear; and finding him resolute in his purpose, besought him to wear a little cross on his expedition, which, he said, "had belonged to his deceased wife, and which having been kissed by the pope, would secure him from the influence of the devil, and his fiends."

To avoid the imputation of obstinacy and irreligion, Alphonfus accepted the offer of the sacred cross, and placed it within his waistcoat.

At a little after ten Alphonfus and Jacques set out for the castle on foot.

Where flesh and blood were to be contended with by day-light, Jacques was no coward, but a breath of wind, or a shadow

in a dark night, were great settlers of his valour. Count Byroff knowing his disposition, had not made him acquainted with any of the particulars which constituted Alphonfus' curiosity in regard to the bell which was founded at the old castle; and as he fortunately had not heard of any dreadful appearance which had been seen in the vicinity of this building, he endeavoured all the way to keep up his courage by repeating to himself, "that the sound of a bell in the night could be no more than the sound of a bell in the day."

Alphonfus, wrapt in reflection, was not much disposed to converse, and they had proceeded nearly a third of the way without speaking, when Jacques suddenly exclaimed, "Do you hear it, *monsieur*?"

"What?" asked Alphonfus.

"The bell, *monieur*?"

"We are yet too distant from the castle to catch the sound," returned Alphonfus.

"So I thought, *monieur*:—that was the reason I asked."

Had Jacques spoken the truth, he would have confessed that he found it very melancholy to proceed so far in silence, and that he despaired of drawing Alphonfus into conversation by any other subject, than the one on which his thoughts were then bent; his stratagem, however, answered but little to his wishes, for Alphonfus again sunk into silent reflection.

“The moon will be up presently, *mon-sieur*, it begins to grow a little light already.”

Alphonfus raised his eyes for a moment to the atmosphere, and then again dropped them to their former situation.

“I wonder how many stars there are, *mon-sieur* :—did you ever count them ?”

“No.”

“Nor I, *mon-sieur* ;—I wonder whether any body ever did ?”

No answer was returned.

“I dare say there are more than a thousand in all ; I am sure I can see five hundred to-night, and there are often as many more on a clear night ; a’n’t there, *mon-sieur* ?”

"Of what?"

"Stars, *monseigneur*."

Jacques now anxiously waited for a rejoinder, but his hopes were deceived. Alphonfus had spoken to the few words he had accidentally heard, without entering into the subject to which they belonged.

Now the silence had been once broken, its recommencement appeared more unpleasant to Jacques, than whilst it had remained totally uninterrupted; his tongue ached to relieve his eyes and ears, which were unremittingly looking out for shapeless monsters, and listening for uncouth sounds; singing and whistling by night he had heard ridiculed as betraying fear; and he could for some time think on no other expedient to divert

the way ; at last a lucky thought entered his head : “ I think I’ll try and count the stars myself, *monfieur*,” he faid, and immediately began counting, *une, deux, trois*, &c. paffing them, as he pronounced the number, on his fingers : he chuckled at this happy expedient ; it exercifed both his eyes and tongue, and amused his hearing ; thus paffed on another third of the way ; Jacques never the nearer in his knowledge of the numeration of the heavenly bodies, but quite as near in reality as he wifhed to be. At laft wearied by his employment, and not at all fatisfied with hearing only his own voice, he defifted from his calculation, and lowered his eyes to the fpot where he fupposed to find Alphonfus walking by his fide ; but he was not there ; for a few moments he flood motionlefs, then looking round on all fides, as far as the flender light of the faintly fhining ftars would

permit him to carry his fight, and not beholding his companion, he ran straight forward in the path along which he supposed Alphonfus to have proceeded, as fast as he could move his legs, and attended by all the noise his overstrained voice could make.

Alphonfus, inattentive to every object but what was passing in his own mind, had insensibly passed his companion, whose pace had been retarded by his pretended studies, and had gained some ground upon him ere Jacques perceived his advance; now, however, roused from his reflections by Jacques' exclamations, he stopped for him, and they were quickly again united, to the no small satisfaction of one party; when an explanation of their parting took place on both sides, and Jacques determining not to let the con-

versation he had now raised, flag, asked Alphonfus "how many ghosts he had ever seen?"

"Not one," replied Alphonfus.

"Then you have seen one less than me, *monseigneur*; and that's what always makes me afraid of being alone in the dark."

"Now I, on the contrary, should have supposed the dark to have been very agreeable to one of your credulous disposition."

"Why so, *monseigneur*?"

"Because I should conceive that in it you could see neither objects to please nor alarm you."

“ Oh dear, *monieur*, how you talk ! why ghosts always light themselves.”

Alphonfus had not spirits either to rally Jacques on his false ideas, or to endeavour to correct them by the arguments of reason, and he remained silent.

Jacques had now a clue for conversation, and he chattered on about spirits, ghosts and witches, to his own joint amusement and terror, till a few minutes brought them within sight of Cohenburg castle, and all his faculties were then absorbed in the use of his eyes.

They advanced within a few yards of the building to a small elevation of the turf, where Alphonfus proposed they should sit down, and wait the expected sound of the

bell. The moon was breaking from under a retiring cloud, and, shedding her partial influence on the building, while its shadow fell upon the place which Alphonfus had chosen for his watching post, gave a pleasing yet melancholy aspect to the scene. It produced sensations in the mind of Jacques which he felt at a loss to explain, and after repeated hesitations how to express himself, he exclaimed, "Well, if ever I am to see another ghost, I am sure this is just the place I should expect to meet it in!"

"Folly!" cried Alphonfus: "how should you expect to see what never existed?"

"*Mon Dieu, monsieur*, how you talk! why all the priests in the world should not make me believe, I did not see one that time I was going to mention to you."

"Well, well, then you did," said Alphonfus, softened by the scene into reflections too dear to be easily shaken off, and wishing to prevent their farther interruption by coalescing in opinion with his companion.

"I thought you would believe me at last, *monfieur*," said Jacques, who flattered himself he had made a convert of Aphonus: "I'll tell you the whole story, — may I, *monfieur*?"

"Oh yes," replied Alphonfus, thoroughly determined not to attend to it, and hoping, by this indulgence of his friend's garrulity, to free himself from the trouble of replying to his questions.

Having cast his eyes around, as a kind of needful security preparative to his dismal

story, and moved a few inches nearer to Alphonsus, Jacques thus began: "When I was about fifteen years old, *monfieur*, my father lived in a little village about a *lieue* from Desmartin, on the road to Paris; ours was a lonely little cottage, for it stood quite at the end of the village, and above a hundred paces distant from the next house; my grandmother was alive then, poor old soul, and she was as much afraid of a ghost as me; so one winter's evening, just before we went to bed, there comes a rap, or indeed it was more like a scratch at the door. 'Come in,' says my father; nobody answered, nor the door did not open; so my father bid me open it, and I did, but nobody was there to be seen; so as I thought it might be somebody that had a mind to frighten us, and had hid themselves behind the wood-stack at the corner of the house, I ran to look, for it was

moon-light; and there I saw a man in black, kneeling down, without a head; and when I called out for help, he got up and ran away as fast as ever he could, and when he had got a little way off, his back looked as white as snow.

“ Well, *monseigneur*, frightened enough I was, as you may suppose, and so was my father, for he saw it too: and a little while after my grandmother died. ‘ Now the murder’s out,’ says my father: ‘ that was a warning of *la bonne*’s death: we shall see no more ghosts now.’ ‘ I hope not, I am sure,’ said I; but he was wrong: for about a month after, one night when the wind was high, there was such a noise in the kitchen after we were gone to bed, that it waked us all, and in a minute or two the door between my father’s chamber and mine burst open, as if *le diable*

lui même had kicked it; then again we heard the noise in the kitchen, and in a few minutes came such a crash, as if the very roof had split over our heads; I covered myself with the bed cloaths; father said he would go down and see what it was, when, just as he was getting out of bed, there was such a rustling on the stairs; and then it seemed to come into the chamber under the door, and all on a sudden a long, deep, hoarse, frightful. . . .” At this instant the bell in the south turret of the castle tolled several strokes, which sounded on the air hollow and dismal; Alphonfus started from his seat, and Jacques remained sitting on the turf in a state of fear scarcely a degree removed from petrification.

CHAP. XXIII.

O, matter and impertinency mixt !
Reason in madness !

LEAR.

COUNT Byroff and Lauretta, eager to learn the result of Alphonfus's watching, had determined not to retire to rest till his return, which they imagined could not be later than an hour after midnight: however, he arrived not with the expected hour, and to add to their consternation, two o'clock brought back Jacques alone, with a countenance distorted by fear and anxiety.

Running up to count Byroff, he exclaimed, " Oh, *monseigneur, monseigneur* ! the devils have got him; they have shut him up in

that cursed old castle; I'd wager my life he never gets out again: *pour l'amour de Dieu*, let us raise the village here hard by, and pull down the walls."

Count Byroff could not be a moment at a loss to understand to whom he referred; but Lauretta, who had fainted, demanded his care prior to his asking an explanation of Jacques's words.

The landlord brought a glass of water to Lauretta. — "I told the young gentleman how it would be," he said; "if he would but have taken an old man's advice, and not have gone, he had been safe; I said there was no good in the spirits ringing that bell."

"I have seen three of them," returned Jacques, "as tall again as you or me, and

all over as black as a crow, face, hands, and all."

"The virgin blefs us all!" said the landlord, crossing himself, and raising his eyes to heaven.

In a few minutes Laupetta revived, — she flew to Jacques, — "Where is my Alphon-sus? — is he in the castle? — answer me."

"Yes, locked in," replied Jacques; "but don't be afraid, *madame*: I dare say the ghosts don't mean to hurt him, for they are all gone away, and left him."

"Explain your words: what do you mean to convey by this inconsistent jargon? — Speak plainly, tell us every thing as it happened," said count Byroff.

“ Why, *monfieur*, when the bell tolled —”

“ Oh, then you have heard it; — aye, I knew I was right,” interrupted the landlord.

“ Oh yes, heard it, *mon Dieu*, I fhall never forget it. When the bell tolled, *monfieur* Alphonsus faid, he was fure then there muft be fomebody within the caftle; and fo he ran away to watch whether he could fee a light in any part of the other fide of the caftle, and ordered me to keep my eye fixed on that oppofite to which I was fitting. I fat ftill more than half an hour, and he did not come back: fometimes I ventured to look, and fometimes I did not: at laft I faw him coming towards me; pleafed enough was I, and I ran to meet him; he had feen nothing, no more had I. He faid it was very odd, and he would only juft try whether the gates were

locked yet or not, and come back alone in the morning; and I told him I thought it would be much the best way. The great gate was locked: but when we came to a little gate at one end of the castle, it was partly open. He seemed very much surprised; and without saying any thing more to me, than bidding me wait for him where I was, and on no account to follow him, he ran in."

"In the dark?" said Laurretta.

"Yes, *madame*."

"He cannot be in any danger on that account," said count Byroff: "he doubtless knows every footstep about the castle."

"Angels guard him!" exclaimed Lau-

retta; the tears rolled swiftly down her cheeks.

“Go on,” said the count to Jacques.

“Well, *monseigneur*, I waited and waited, and he did not come back: I was frightened to stay very near the castle, so I went and sat myself down at a little distance opposite to the little gate, when presently out came the three black things I told you of, and ——”

“What things?” eagerly asked Lauretta, who had not heard Jacques mention them before.

“Why, *madame*, ghosts I am sure they were, for they stalked past where I was sitting, without speaking, and I could not hear them set a foot; and the last of them locked the

gate as he came out, for I heard the key turn in the lock."

"Did you try whether it was locked?" asked the count.

"No, *monfieur*, I durst not go near it, for fear they should appear again, and take me to task for meddling; so when I had waited a good while longer, and *monfieur* Alphonse did not come, I ran home to tell you what had happened; and a fine solitary walk I have had of it, *monfieur*; *graces à Dieu*, that I got here at all;—only feel how warm I am with running," continued he, turning to the host.

Count Byroff and Laretta fixed their eyes on each other in silence, but both their countenances expressively asked the import-

ant question of what steps could be taken for the best.

They could ask no foreign assistance without betraying the secret which Alphonfus so strongly wished to remain unknown, and the mystery attendant on which he might at the very moment be solving.

The determination of one moment, the reflection of the next rejected. Lauretta was suffering on the rack of apprehension, and count Byroff was tortured by the agony he perceived his child enduring.

In little more than an hour, a loud knock at the door called out the landlord; Alphonfus rushed in, and threw himself upon a seat, regardless of surrounding objects.

Neither the congratulations of Jacques on his safe return, nor the caresses of his Lauretta, could for some moments obtain even a look in return: a frantic wildness was depicted on his countenance, and his stretched eyes were fixed on vacancy.

Count Byroff requested the landlord and Jacques to retire; they reluctantly complied with his petition.

"Oh, Alphonfus!" said Lauretta, throwing herself on his neck, "what new affliction has happened to you?—what aggravated sorrow is it, that deprives you of the power of teaching me to sympathise in your grief?—Tell me, I beseech you! 'twere mitigation of the agony I now experience, to share with you the most complicated misery."

Alphonfus answered her not.

Sinking on her knees, she clasped his; —
“Speak, I conjure you, if you love me:
ease these cruel fears: what can I do to serve
you? — Name what you wish, and you shall
find me ready to obey you.”

Springing from her side, “Hate me,” he
exclaimed with increasing wildness, “hate
me! I know you will,—you must hate me.”

“Never! witness heaven! — can you sup-
pose so meanly of me, that accumulated
misfortune shall win from me the regard of
him I once have loved? The hard dealing of
the world towards you, shall only strengthen
my love for you; and if you still account it
as worthy your possession as you once did,
your loss shall be your gain.”

“ Oh that I were worthy of that treasure !” he cried : “ but an angel’s love like yours must draw down curses on a wretch, whose disobedience to a mother’s last command has called her from the silent grave !— Yes, I have seen her ! — seen her honoured shade, come to upbraid me for my want of confidence in her commands ; to scorch my eyes, and swell with tides of grief my heart-strings till they crack, and end the torture of this maddened brain !” — Again he sunk into the chair.

Lauretta wept, and count Byroff supported her in his arms. — “ Oh, my foreboding heart !” she cried, “ this danger I foresaw.”

“ ’Tis here,” cried Alphonfus, again starting up ; “ here, hot and rankling : a parent’s curse for disobedience, shot from the

glaring eyes of death!"—He turned to Lauretta: his eye regained its wonted calmness. —"Do not you curse me too: I never disobeyed you; say, you will not."

"Have I not this instant conjured you to listen to my vows of love, of truth, of constancy?"

"But you may turn cruel."—The tears stole down his cheek. —"My mother was once kind, as you are now; and for one, one act of disobedience, though my rent heart could no longer exist in uncertainty, she has — Oh, had you seen her!" a sigh, drawn from the bottom of his heart, followed: — falling on his knees, he clasped Lauretta's hand, and pulled her down by him;—"Pray with me; pray to my mother for her forgiveness."—He clasped his hands, and seem-

ed to pray inwardly some moments, whilst his countenance underwent various changes of frantic sorrow and pain: at length he exclaimed, "Oh! revoke, revoke——" The remainder of the sentence died on his tongue, and he fell to the ground.

Count Byroff immediately called in the assistance of Jacques, and Alphonfus was conveyed between them to a bed; and it was, for nearly an hour, a doubt to the count whether he lived or not: at length, when he again raised his eyelids, his eyes, which had before betrayed the wildest frenzy, bespoke the most painful sorrow: he looked anxiously round the apartment, and discovering Lauretta, he beckoned eagerly to her; she flew to his side: he grasped her hand in his,—
"Do not leave me! promise you will not leave me."

"Indeed I will not," she answered.

"Why are you not in bed?" he rejoined:

"I have had so horrid a dream!—Oh!"

Lauretta turned her face aside to conceal her tears.

Alphonfus looked stedfastly on count Byroff: — "You here, my friend? and you too?" observing Jacques — "Did you hear me call out in my dream?"—He then seemed suddenly to observe that he was not undrest, and lying only on the outside of the bed; he looked round in surprise, and tacit inquiry of the cause: then, seeming to recollect himself, he started, a degree of wildness flashed in his eyes, and he exclaimed, "It was reality; it was no dream; would to God it had been!"

The night passed on mournfully: Alphonfus answered rationally, but in slow and desponding accents, to every question that bordered not upon the subject which tingled on his heart. Once count Byroff ventured to touch upon the tender chord; his words then became incoherent, and his gestures indicated a heated brain.

Lauretta became more affected, and count Byroff more alarmed. Jacques wept, prayed, consoled Lauretta, and advised the count by turns, not forgetting to whisper at intervals to the landlord, "that he was sure the black devils had done all the mischief." The host on his part entreated the count, that a friar might be sent for, to pray by Alphonfus, from the monastery of the Holy Spirit, which he said was not above half a league distant.

Alphonfus continued in the same state; and towards noon Lauretta entreated that the landlord's advice might be put in execution. Count Byroff had not much faith in the effect of prayer on a mind disordered by frenzy, but readily consented to the petition of his daughter; and the landlord offered himself to be their messenger to the monastery: some travellers, however, entering at the very moment the host was about to set out, he was obliged to delay going; but Lauretta's anxiety making every lost moment of consequence to the salvation of her husband, a little boy from the neighbouring village, who happened by chance to be passing by, was prevailed on by the promise of a trifling reward to show Jacques the road to the holy mansion.

In little more than an hour Jacques re-

turned, accompanied by a brother of the monastery, who, in addition to his holy office, was skilled in the art of physic.

Count Byroff met him at the door of Alphonfus's apartment, and leading him to the bed, solely informed him, that the senses of the youth, for whom he requested his assistance, had been deranged by some recent and aggravated calamities, which his state of mind had rendered it impossible for him to explain.

The friar requested him to name what he thought to be the cause of his malady; count Byroff declared himself ignorant of it.

The holy man took Alphonfus's hand in one of his, and placed the fingers of the other on his pulse: Alphonfus raised his

eyes, and fixing them stedfastly on the countenance of the friar for some moments, he exclaimed, "Who art thou?"—Thy garb bespeaks thee a comforter:—dost thou bring me pardon?—Has she pronounced my forgiveness?"

"Compose thyself, my son: confide in heaven, and hope the best," was the answer.

"Shame, shame!" returned Alphonfus: "thou art a deceiver: thy outward garb speaks hope to wretchedness, and thy false tongue belies his expectations. — Away, away! in pity do not torture me."

Alphonfus placed his hand before his eyes, and sunk on his pillow. The friar turned to count Byroff and Lauretta;—
"There is some concealed sense even in this

seeming madness," he said; "has he been ever thus before?"

"Never," said Laretta.

"The cause was sudden then?" said the holy man, addressing Laretta.

"And unknown to us," she returned.

"I will lull awhile his imagination by a draught of a healing and composing nature, and trust its powers will add much to recall his wandering senses."

He then knelt, and prayed devoutly to the divine power to assist his earnest endeavours for the restitution of mental and bodily health to his patient. — Laretta joined fervently in the prayer.

The friar then departed, and Jacques accompanied him to the monastery, to bring back the medicine he had recommended for Alphonfus.

CHAP. XXIV.

————— Now o'er the one-half world
Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse
The curtain'd sleep ; now witchcraft celebrates
Pale Hecate's offerings, and wither'd murder,
Alarum'd by his sentinel, the wolf,
Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace,
With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design
Moves like a ghost.

MACBETH.

WHEN Jacques returned, count Byroff immediately saw by his countenance that he was brimful of some intelligence which he wished to communicate to him ; and accordingly, a few minutes after he had left the chamber, he followed him out.

" Ah, *monseigneur*," cried Jacques, on be-

holding him, "I am glad you are come down; I have got something so unaccountable to tell you, and I did not know whether I might mention it before *madame*."

"To what does it relate?" asked the count anxiously.

"Why, *monseigneur*, you shall hear. When I got to the monastery, the old friar desired me to wait in the *refectoire*, in one corner of which was a door a little way open, and behind it I could hear glasses jingling, and people talking and laughing; so, when the friar was gone, I crept a little nearer to the door to listen what they were after, for my curiosity was a good deal raised, I must confess: when I first overheard them, one was telling a story about the pope, I fancy; for it was a man that they said was a good deal like an

old woman, and the cardinals wished him dead; so when it was done, says another, 'Come, father Francisco, give us a toast.' 'I will,' says he: — 'Here's the ghost at the castle, and wishing it may ring as long as we all live.' Well, *monfieur*, they all laughed, and I could hear them pouring out the liquor, and then they repeated what father Francisco had said, and then I could hear them set down the empty glasses. 'I wonder where the young count is,' says another, after a minute or two's silence. 'Why, as to that,' said another — and just then I heard the old man coming back with the draught; so I stepped forward to meet him, and when I had got it he let me out, and so I heard no more."

Count Byroff having told Jacques to wait within Laurretta's call, walked out upon the

green before the little inn, to indulge the reflections for which the conversation Jacques had overheard, had given him a subject.

It appeared to him evident beyond a doubt that the midnight bell at the castle was tolled by the friars belonging to the monastery of the Holy Spirit, as a confirmation of the castle's being haunted, which report they had probably been the first to circulate, to promote some private interest: thus he conceived also that the black figures which Jacques had seen issuing from the postern gate of the castle, were three of the fraternity, who had been to the castle for the purpose of raising the nightly alarm by sounding the bell, and were returning to the monastery when Jacques beheld them; that they had gone into the castle at first unseen by Alphonfus and Jacques, and the open

gate by which the former had entered the castle had doubtless been left so by them, whilst they were in the castle, unsuspecting of any one having ventured to approach so near a place of such general horror as that building was described to be by all that knew it. But how was he to account for Alphonfus's excessive alarm, which could not have been produced by the appearance of three friars, if even he had seen them, which circumstances seemed to contradict that he had, or they him? — for his getting out of the castle, as Jacques had said that the last figure had locked the gate? — and above all for Alphonfus's assertion that he had seen his mother's shade? — Might it not have been the work of priestcraft? he asked himself; but his knowledge of Alphonfus's manly courage, which, though his eyes might have been a moment deceived

by any false appearance, would have led him to have investigated the truth, ere he gave himself up to those feelings which alone could have reduced his faculties to the state he was now in, instantly contradicted the idea. Lengthened conjecture tended but to perplex him, and he determined, if the potion administered by father Nicholas had not the desired effect, at all hazards to himself to attempt the solution of the mystery which clouded the castle equally with the real cause of Alphonfus's present state of mind, by personal investigation.

The draught given by the friar was of a somnific nature, and in a short time after its being swallowed by Alphonfus, produced the intended effect.

“Towards midnight count Byroff with

much difficulty prevailed on Lauretta, who had not tasted rest the preceding night, to retire to bed.

With the dawn Alphonfus awoke; he raised himself on the bed, and drawing back the curtain, seemed to listen, — “Hark! — was it not she that spoke?”

“Who, my friend?” said count Byroff, advancing to the bed.

“My mother.”

A pause ensued.—Count Byroff wished to pursue the discourse, but knew not in what manner to continue it.

“Will you go with me to the castle?” said Alphonfus.

"Why do you wish it?" — Is she there?"

"Not now, I fear," replied Alphonse, raising his eyes to the casement, as indicating that day-light was beginning to appear. "It was in the dead of the night that I saw her; did I not tell you that she had a burning lamp in her hand?"

"No."

"But she was dead: her cheeks were pale and sunk; my disobedience called her from the grave: I would fain see her once more, and kneel for her forgiveness: and would she then but calm her angry looks, I should die happy."

"Did she speak angrily to you?"

"I know not whether she spoke at all; my eyes and heart ached so I could not bear her sight; — feel how my temples beat even now."

Count Byroff raised his hand in compliance with Alphonfus's request; he grasped it. "Do not ask me to go to the castle; indeed I will not, I shall double my crime; I must not go, I dare not see her again. If you should see her, tell her —; but you will not see her; you have not disobeyed her; she will not frown on you; think you no more of it; I must bear with it." He hid his face on the pillow, and the count forebore to interrogate him farther on a subject which he saw was beginning to overpower him.

This short conversation, which tended

not to enlighten the subject discussed, strengthened however count Byroff's resolution of visiting the castle on the first opportunity offered to him, and endeavouring to gain some light on this strange mystery.

A few hours after sun-rise father Nicholas visited his patient; he pronounced him to have been much benefited by the composing draught, and gave the most encouraging hopes of a speedy amendment. Lauretta was not in the chamber when the holy man arrived, but being informed by Jacques that he was visiting her husband, she immediately entered the apartment, and eagerly inquired of him after the health of her Alphonfus.

The name seemed to produce a momentary surprise in the countenance of the friar, but immediately regaining his former com-

posure, he answered to her inquiry : count Byroff alone perceived the effect which had been produced on father Nicholas, nor was he mistaken in imagining that the friar's a second time approaching the bed under pretence of feeling his patient's pulse, was an excuse for more closely investigating Alphonfus's features than he had yet done. Promising to visit his patient in the afternoon, and to bring with him such medicines as were necessary, the father left the chamber, and count Byroff accompanied him to the door of the inn, in order to prevent his holding any discourse with the landlord ; and immediately on the old man's departure, he warned the host against acknowledging to any one that Alphonfus had visited the castle, being as yet uncertain whether benefit or harm to Alphonfus was to be expected from such an avowal.

Towards evening the friar returned. Alphonfus's mind was still in a state that baffled count Byroff's most ingenious attempt to draw from him the cause of his disorder. The friar seated himself by the side of the bed; he again inquired in a more exact manner than he had before done, whether they could form no remote conjecture of the cause of the malady under which his patient was labouring; he received the same answers from the count and Lauretta which had before been given him. He remained for some moments silent, his countenance by no means exhibiting a strong conviction of the veracity of their words. "Have you travelled far?" he then said.

"Many leagues," answered the count.

"And is the place whither you are going far from hence?"

"As soon as my friend is sufficiently recovered to proceed, he will determine our route."

"You are then on an excursion of pleasure!"

A slight inclination of the head on the part of count Byroff, was the answer to this demand.

Many other questions, answered with as little satisfaction to the friar's curiosity, were advanced by him, and he departed for the night.

Lauretta, who was not acquainted with the conversation which Jacques had overheard at the monastery, looked upon what the old man had said to have been dictated

by a no more than common curiosity, excited by the situation of her husband; count Byroff, though he did not undeceive his daughter in this point, considered it in a very different light, and he even began to conceive that the solution of the mystery would prove count Frederic Cohenburg to have retired to the monastery of the Holy Spirit, to enjoy, unmolested, possessions criminally acquired. Still, however, as it was certain that if his conjecture was a true one, all the friars were privy to the plot, he saw no means of effecting the discovery but by ascertaining by whom the bell at the castle was nightly rung, and this he determined if possible to learn that very night.

The medicine last administered by the friar to Alphonfus, count Byroff perceived to possess the same quality, only in a less po-

tent degree, as the former one he had taken, and this lessened his anxiety at the idea of leaving Laurretta for so long a space of time as was necessary to his purpose: he determined, however, not to inform her of the plan in agitation, and when she entreated him to retire in his turn for the night, which he well knew she would do, he pretended to comply with her request, on condition that Jacques might be her companion in watching over her husband. The landlord having provided him with a lantern, and implements for striking a light, reluctantly, as he trembled for the safety of the count, conducted him as far on his way as the intricacy of the road made it necessary for a stranger to have a guide; and then, with injunctions to secrecy on the part of the count, and prayers for the count's protection from evil spirits, on the part of the landlord, they

parted, — the host returning home, and count Byroff proceeding along the road leading to the castle.

Count Byroff had advanced only a few yards when the distant sound of the bell fell on his ear; he regretted that necessity had obliged him to set out later than he had intended, but still resolving to pursue his enterprise, he proceeded forward with an increased speed.

Arrived at the castle, natural curiosity, which the shining moon favoured, induced him to eye it in every part as he walked round it, in search of the postern-gate: for an instant he thought he caught the glimmering of a light from a window in the second range of apartments; he stopped and looked, but it did not return, and he passed on,

believing his imagination had deceived him.

At length he arrived at the postern-gate; it was shut; he pushed against it, and it yielded heavily to the pressure of his arm; he entered a few steps; he looked round; all was silence and darkness.

He stepped back without the gate, and having lighted the wick within his lantern, which he held in such a manner as to be able in an instant to conceal it in the skirts of a mantle which he wore over his shoulders, he again entered, and closed the gate after him as he had found it.

He proceeded along a vaulted passage, at the extremity of which a turn to the left conducted through a door into the great

hall of the castle. He stepped forward a few paces, and raising his lantern, the better to view surrounding objects, nothing met his sight but cumbrous pillars of fluted marble, which were ranged on each side of the hall; and at the extremity, the dark iron-gates which seemed to form a blot in the azure-coloured wall. He turned himself round; facing the gates was a spacious flight of stairs, on each side of which was a high and narrow door; by one of them he had entered the hall.

He ascended the stairs; to the right and left lay an extensive gallery; he again held up his lantern, and directed his eyes first to the extremity of that on the right; he perceived doors on either side, and that it ended in a blank wall. He then turned to the left; the extent of the gallery was greater than

that on the right, and as he viewed it, a figure seemed to flit quickly through the shade at the extremity.

He advanced swiftly along: at the end of the gallery was a turn to the right, which led, by the descent of a few steps, into another gallery, much resembling that he had just left: at the extremity of this a door, partly open, attracted his notice: hiding his lantern he looked in, and perceived that all was dark: he uncloaked his lantern, and entered a chamber richly furnished: there were no apparent signs of its having been lately inhabited, nor was there a second door in it: he returned to the gallery. The shutting of a door at some distance from him next attracted his attention; he could not determine exactly from what part of the castle the sound had proceeded, but he conjectured

it to have issued from the gallery on the right of the flight of stairs which had conducted him from the hall : he followed the found, and the gallery terminated, as the other had done, by a descent of a few steps into a passage of equal size.

After debating in his mind for some moments what plan to follow, he descended the steps : arrived at the end he found a door as on the other side : he used the same precaution with his lantern as he had before done, and was just grasping the handle of the door, with an intent to open it, when he heard a long groan, which seemed to be uttered by a person not far distant from him : he turned round his head ; but nothing was to be seen : he was willing to imagine his senses had been deceived, and was again applying his hand to the door, when his action was arrested

by what seemed a stifled shriek in the apartment to which that door led. He listened, the same kind of sound was twice more repeated; he was convinced that it had issued from behind the door, close by which he now stood. For a few moments all was still, and he was a third time on the point of entering, when several voices seemed to break out together into tones of supplication: his astonishment was now wound to a higher pitch than before: suddenly the voices changed their tones into the notes of a solemn chaunt; in this he immediately recognised the work of priests, and determining at once to unravel the mystery, with his lantern still concealed, he pushed open the door and entered.

Nearly opposite to where he had entered, was a small arched door-way, from which

issued a faint light; he proceeded a few steps towards it, and on looking forward, immediately found that he was now in a small vestry behind the altar of a chapel, into which the arched door before him led. He ventured cautiously forward to a spot where he could command a view of the greater part of the chapel; at a short distance from the steps leading to the altar, knelt, by the side of a coffin, a figure of a pale and emaciated countenance, in whose left hand was a cross, and in the right a knotted cord.

On the other side of the coffin knelt three friars, who were singing the chaunt which count Byroff had heard begun, whilst standing by the outer door: the chaunt being finished, the friars crossed themselves, and began a prayer, in which they supplicat-

ed mercy for the guilty. Upon this the figure, whose sex the sable and loose garments it wore, tended not to declare, rose, and began to lash its shoulders with the cord, the pain occasioned by which caused it to send forth sounds of lamentation, such as the count had before heard: this done, the friars offered up another prayer, in which the penitent figure joined, and they then together left the chapel by a door opposite to the altar, taking with them a lamp which during their devotions had been placed on the coffin round which they had knelt.

All count Byroff's former plans of obstinate perseverance into the mystery in which the castle was enveloped, were put to flight by what he had seen: awe and reverence for the solemnity of the religious worship in which he had seen the friars and the suffering

person engaged, whose salvation their prayers seemed meant to effect, had forbid him to interrupt their devotions; and when they were ended he felt an insurmountable objection to introducing himself to those who might have a right to dispute his unlicensed entrance into the castle, and refuse to attend to his excuse.

Some minutes were lost by him in reflection how to proceed, when he heard footsteps at a distance in the gallery; but they were no sooner heard, than they died away, and he doubted not, from what Jacques had told him he had seen on the night of his waiting without the castle for Alphonfus, that the friars were now departing; the shutting of a gate, with the sound of which the castle immediately after rang, confirmed him in his opinion.

He resolved to enter the chapel, and if possible, discover whither was gone the figure whom he had seen; for he strongly conceived, he knew not why, that it had not left the castle: as to who the figure was, his mind wavered between count Frederic, and the countess Anna; the former his own ideas taught him to believe it; but the words uttered by Alphonfus seemed to assign a degree of probability to its being the latter: arrived at the end of the chapel, he found that the door through which the persons he had just beheld, had passed, was an iron grating; he pulled at it, but it resisted his efforts, being fastened by a spring, which he was not acquainted how to open. As he stood by it, a glimmering of light, at some distance, caught his eyes; he hid his lantern; the light advanced, and showed him that the iron gate led into a long and narrow passage; at the extremity

of which, in a few seconds, appeared, bearing a lamp, the figure he had lately beheld in the chapel: it opened a door facing him, and having entered, immediately closed it, and all was again dark.

He again produced his lantern; but the door through which the figure had passed, was too far removed for him to distinguish it with the aid only of the light in his hand: he determined, however, if possible, to find it; and, if he could, to address the person who had so strongly excited his attention and surprise.

After entering many chambers and passages in vain, a suite of rooms brought him to a chamber, from a door in which, a small closet, through which he passed, led him into the passage, at the extremity of which was

the grated door from the chapel: he moved hastily to the other end, in search of the door by which the figure had vanished from his sight: the form of the wall was a semicircle, constituting, as he concluded, part of one of the turrets, of which there were four at the angles of the castle; but his most minute investigations could discover in it no door, or even crevice.

He placed his lantern on the ground, and for some time continued to pass his hands over every part of the wall, in the hope of discovering some clue to the object of his search; at length he imagined that he felt through the plaster a small elevation, which appeared to the touch like a flat hinge; he took up his lantern in order to examine the spot where he felt it, when, to his great disappointment, he perceived

that his wick was dying out in the socket : he now found it necessary to return to the gallery as quickly as possible, whilst he had light to conduct him, lest from his being delayed a longer time than he wished, by searching his way in the dark, his absence should be learned by Laupretta, and add additional fears on his account, to her already too much afflicted mind ; he accordingly precipitately retraced the path which had conducted him to this passage, and arrived in the gallery at the moment the last spark in his lantern became extinguished.

Day was fortunately for him beginning to dawn, and he easily descended into the hall, and gained, by recollecting his way, the postern gate, when, what had never occurred to him till he experienced it, the gate

was locked, and thus all means of departing excluded from him.

He upbraided himself for not having forestalled the friars' departure, which, had he but considered the matter, Jacques's narrative of the occurrences of the night before the last had warned him to do; he returned to the hall, and attempted to open the great gates, but they baffled his endeavours; how had Alphonfus got out after the departure of the friars? was a question he next asked himself; but he found it not less a difficult matter to answer this demand, than at the present moment to effect his escape.

All he now felt was anxiety for what Lauretta would experience, should she discover his absence, and learn whither he was gone.

Nearly two hours were spent by him in vain attempts to leave the castle, and unavailing lamentations; on a sudden he imagined he heard a key turn in the lock of the postern gate; he stopped a few seconds to listen; no sound followed it; and he almost feared his expectations to have been falsely raised; he determined, however, to ascertain the truth, and accordingly proceeded to the postern gate; it was partly open, his heart leaped with joy, and eagerly crossing the threshold, he set forward without stopping to consider by whom, or from what cause, the gate had been opened.

Arrived at the inn panting for breath, count Byroff instantly inquired of the landlord whether Lauretta had asked for him, and with much satisfaction he learned that

she had not. The host had, by the count's desire, sat up till his return, and count Byroff having, in recompence for his complacency, satisfied his curiosity in regard to the tolling of the wonderful bell, they both retired to their respective apartments.

Count Byroff threw himself on the bed, and immediately began to re-examine in his mind the occurrences of which he had been a witness in the castle; and severely did he task himself for not having, at all hazards, aimed at a development of the mystery which it seemed so necessary to the welfare of those with whom he was concerned to have explained; and yet he conceived that he had but acted consistently with the respect due to religious offices.

Unable long to bear this contest of opi-

nions within his own breast, on a matter of so great importance, and of so tender a nature, he entered the chamber of Alphonfus, who was still lulled by the soothing influence of the draught he had taken; Laurretta refused to retire to bed that night; Jacques readily accepted the offer of leaving for a few hours his post of watching.

The count determined not to impart to Laurretta his visit to the castle, as he wished to make one more attempt at solving the enigma, now more perplexing to him than ever, and which he feared her entreaties and alarm for his safety, were she acquainted with his intention, or even surmised it, might induce him to abandon.

It was some hours ere Alphonfus spoke, though he had been long awake: he then

called Laupetta to him and embraced her; the tears ran down his cheeks. "Is the holy friar here?" he asked.

Laupetta answered, that she every moment expected his arrival.

"Would he were come!" continued Alphonfus. "I would unburthen to him my heart: his counsel might relieve me, if his prayers and intercession cannot obtain my pardon."

"Am not I equally worthy the participation of your secret thoughts?" said Laupetta tenderly.

"Oh my Laupetta!" returned Alphonfus, "it is my love for you, that causes me to hide them from you."

“Do you then suppose that I am less moved to see you unhappy, than if you had acquainted me with all the particulars for your present anxiety? — Oh Alphonfus! can you believe my heart less feeling towards you, than yours has been to me?”

“You are too good, too kind,” cried Alphonfus, “to one who, choaked by melancholy and despair, has never given you a cheerful smile, in gratitude for those endearments, which have been his only comfort.”

“Indeed you wrong yourself. I have been happy, very happy — witness heaven, very happy,” said Laurretta, stifling her tears.

“I fear I have said too much,” replied Alphonfus, looking stedfastly in her face;

"I have already told you what afflicts me; have I not?"

"Forget it, I entreat you," answered Lauretta.

"Never! never!" he exclaimed. "My senses have been lately so disordered, that I scarcely know what has passed; did I tell you that I had seen my mother's shade?"

Lauretta was at a loss how to answer for the best: she looked at count Byroff for advice; she saw he was perplexed not less than herself; the door of the chamber opened, and father Nicholas entered to their relief.

The father passed on to that side of the bed opposite to which Lauretta was standing;

"A good and blessed day to thee, my son!" he said.

Alphonfus turned towards him, and said, "Wouldst thou indeed bless me?"

"Thou hast my most fervent prayers to heaven," returned the holy man.

"If thou hast my welfare at heart, thou wilt be secret, if I confess to thee my sorrows," said Alphonfus, with more composure than he had yet spoken.

"Secrecy is a bond of my office; speak freely, my son, and fear me not."

"Go to the castle of Cohenburg to-night; when the midnight bell has sounded, thou

wilt find the postern gate open to thee : enter the chapel, and pray for me forgiveness for my disobedience, of my mother's shade : if thou seest her not, she will hear thee, for she inhabits there ; tell her I repent my forbidden visit, though I have learned no secret by it ; and if she refuse to pardon me, I will die to prove my penitence."

"Are you indeed the heir of Cohenburg castle?" said father Nicholas, surprise and pleasure mingling in his countenance.

"Oh no! no!" replied Alphonfus, "I am only the lost, abandoned, cursed Alphonfus."

"When did you visit the castle?" asked the friar.

"It was"—said Alphonfus:—he pause:

"It was by night; but I cannot recollect whether last night, or not."

"It was two nights ago," said the count.

Lauretta had retired to the window; the friar went to her—"Are you the wife of this young man?"

"I am, father."

"Dry your tears, be comforted; happiness is yet in store for you."

"God grant your words be true."

"Trust to his mercy; through me he compassionates your afflictions."

He again approached the bed: "I will pray for you, my son; rest assured, and place faith in my endeavours;—I shall visit you again to-day; till then peace be with you: farewell."

He departed, and his words for some time occupied, in silent reflection, those he had left.

CHAP. XXV.

There is but one, one only thing to think on,
My murder'd lord, and his dark gaping grave,
That waits unclos'd, impatient of my coming.

ROWE.

TOWARDS evening father Nicholas returned; he found Alphonfus risen: his health was materially restored; but his spirits were still depressed, and a degree of wildness was at times visible in his countenance.

"Didst thou know my mother?" said Alphonfus, first reverting to the subject on which all were thinking, but none had yet touched.

"Full well," returned the holy man. "Is it possible you do not recollect me?" continued he with some hesitation.

"No," replied Alphonfus, "no; and yet methinks that scar above your eye claims place in my remembrance; pardon me, that my harassed brain excludes all thought but on one subject; I pray you tell me your name."

"Father Nicholas, many years your mother's confessor."

"I know you now." He took his hand, pressed it in his, then kissed it. "You saw my mother then before she died?" — The friar hesitated to answer; Alphonfus perceived it not, and continued — "Did she wish again to see her son?" — The friar was still silent;

Alphonfus went on, " You doubtless know my sad story ?"

" I do."

" Oh ! why did she discard me from her affections ? wretched forlorn Alphonfus ! my mother cruel ! my father murdered ! — Oh God ! grant me to know his affassin ! — Father, I have a vow in heaven of vengeance against his murderer, and here again I swear——"

The friar interrupted him, " Calm thy agitation, my son : thou canst not recall him into life by shedding another's blood ; why then stain thy hands in murder ?"

" Thou say'st true : heaven will avenge the deed better than I can ; my hate and curses must fall on him. — Oh, if he must

have fallen, would he had fallen by any hand rather than that he did!"

Father Nicholas sighed deeply.

"Who that knew him, could have believed that count Frederic would have murdered his brother?"

"If you believe he did, you wrong his memory."

"Is he too dead? — none left to bear a load of grief but me! — I recollect my mother told me, when she sent me from her, he was innocent; but she had first taught me to believe him guilty: — 'twas strange!"

A pause ensued.

Suddenly recollecting himself, Alphonfus exclaimed, "If you can exculpate the innocent, you can arraign the guilty: — confess to me, I conjure you, whom I ought to hate; and guide my vengeance by your own discretion."

"Lay aside all thoughts of revenge; we are enjoined to be charitable to all; and who more strongly claims our pity, than he who suffers from the pangs of a conscience, that reproves him with the commission of murder?"

"It is a sentiment too refined to bias the heart of a son, bleeding at the recollection of a father's untimely death."

"The more severe our trials, the greater

will be the reward bestowed on us, if amidst their severity we still do not deviate from the exercise of christian duty."

"If my mother knew the murderer!" Alphonfus exclaimed wildly, without having seemed to attend to father Nicholas's last words; and suddenly he interrupted himself.—"Did she know him?" he added.

The holy man was silent.

"Say rather that she killed him,—burst my swelling heart, and end at once my agonies in death, than torture me by this mysterious hesitation."

The old man was affected to tears, by the transports of Alphonfus's feelings.—
"Wou'dst thou not rather that thy father

lived, though thou couldst never see him more, than know him dead?" he asked.

"If he were happy, witness heaven, I would."

"And if thy absence from him constituted but his negative comfort, and even caused thy sorrow, hast thou enough of filial piety in thee to obey him?"

"Oh yes! on any terms, 'twere happiness to know he lived. But to what end avail these questions? I know he lives not, and yet you dazzle my imagination with ideas of what cannot be?"

"You once thought a mother had an equal claim on your obedience."

“Forbear, forbear to rack my heart, by telling me I wanted fortitude to obey her commands.”

“Rouse your strength of mind to execute them now.”

“What mean you? — explain yourself, I conjure you.”

“Know then she lives, — but you must never see her more.”

Alphonfus had till this moment been comparatively calm: — “Lives!” he re-echoed, in the most piercing accents; then falling on his knees, and raising his hands to heaven — “Angels of mercy, I thank you! — It was then her living self I saw; my disobedience did not call her from the grave. The eyes

the fixed upon me, were not those of death. — Oh God, I thank thee!" — A flood of tears relieved his full heart, swelled with a multiplicity of undescrivable sensations.

A general silence prevailed for some moments, when Alphonfus could again articulate, "May I not once more see her,—only once, to implore her forgiveness?" he said.

"You have her pardon; rest satisfied in that assurance," returned the friar.

"Tell me, then," cried Alphonfus, "tell me why she refuses again to behold me? — And hard, very hard as I feel the struggle between duty and inclination, I will not press to see her."

"There is a just cause for her refusal. I

have her permission to reveal it to you; and much I think, when you have learnt it, you will no longer press your late entreaty."

"Speak it, I beseech you."

"Have you fortitude to hear a tale of horror, which is nearly related to yourself?"

"Oh yes: my heart has felt too much substantial misery, to sink beneath recited ills."

"I need not warn a wife to secrecy, on a point of tender interest to her husband," said the friar, raising his eyes to Lauretta, and then passing them on to count Byroff.

"Nor her father," said the count, "to act for the welfare of both."

The friar gently inclined his head, in token of his satisfaction, and thus began :—

“ On the death of your aunt, count Frederic’s wife, the kind attentions which the goodness of your mother’s heart inclined her to use towards his children, raised in the breast of your deceased father a suspicion that her regards were bestowed on his offspring from the love which she bore their father.

“ How this unhappy suspicion ever gained way into his thoughts, I can no otherwise account for, than that the single foible of his nature was an inclination towards distrust; and I am certain that your uncle and mother were both innocent of the false imputation which your father laid on them.

“ The three first years after the loss of his

wife were sorrowfully marked to count Frederic by the death of his children; and, unable to remain in the midst of scenes which gave him such ample scope for poignant reflection, he resolved to travel. He visited Venice; and here chance introduced him to a lady who seemed to promise a reparation of the loss he had sustained; but a mercenary father doomed her to the arms of a man she disliked, who carried her away from Venice; and his repeated journies and inquiries could never lead him to discover whither she had been conveyed."

The agitation here expressed by the count and Lauretta, induced the friar to break off his narrative, and inquire the cause of their emotions: count Byroff briefly explained it, to the great surprise of the friar, who in re-

turn informed them, that, after the count's departure from Venice, a report had been circulated by Arieno's servants, that count Byroff, having killed the son of a senator in a duel, had fled with his wife into Spain, to which kingdom count Frederic's researches after his Lauretta were then confined.

This, though a new instance of count Arieno's villany, was but a slight one, and count Byroff requested the friar to proceed.

"Every return of your uncle into Germany refreshed your father's fears, which his absence had lulled: he perceived his brother to be a prey to grief, and as he always refused to explain what afflicted him, your father's suspicion grew stronger on the repeated refusals of your uncle to divulge his cause of sorrow.

“The last time your uncle returned, was with a resolution no longer to pursue a fruitless search after her he loved; and he retired to his own mansion, where he determined to live a recluse from the world, visiting only his brother's castle.

“Every visit continued to increase your father's secret suspicion; and although he was always present when count Frederic saw his wife, he worked himself into a persuasion that a criminal intercourse was actually subsisting between them. At length, no longer able to bear the torture of suspicion, he resolved to clear his doubts, convinced that he could not be more miserable than he now was, be the result of his stratagem what it might.

“He accordingly gave out that an affair

of consequence called him to Vienna. It was a probable circumstance, and gained belief: the day prior to his departure, he visited his brother: he told him that he had a matter of the greatest importance to confide to him, and in which he must entreat his assistance, which count Frederic readily promised. Your father then required of him to swear that he would be secret, before he communicated to him the matter in question: to this your uncle at first objected, but after many entreaties on the part of your father, he gave his faith not to reveal to any one what he should impart to him. Your father then told him that he suspected the fidelity of his wife.—Count Frederic, as it is easy to suppose, showed marks of no small surprise at this intelligence. Your father immediately misconstrued his astonishment with secret satisfaction at his own sagacity and penetration. Count

Frederic proceeded to inquire whom his brother supposed to be the paramour of your mother? 'Suffice it that I know him,' returned your father; 'what I have to require of you is, that during my absence you will endeavour to win my wife to your love, and inform me of your success on my return.'—Count Frederic remonstrated warmly against measures, from which he could not possibly conceive that any discovery or advantage could be derived; but your father was so earnest in his entreaties, that count Frederic at length yielded to make the experiment.

"On the following day, a fatal day to him, your father left his castle, and taking with him old Robert his faithful servant, they proceeded to the cottage of my sister, about five leagues north of Cohenburg castle. I was in the secret of your father's

plan, and had, at his request, there provided for him a reception.

“For nearly two months, your unhappy mother was constrained to bear the blandishments and caresses which count Frederic unwillingly tempted her with; she complained in private to me, and I could only give her such consolation as I taught her to derive from the innocence of her own heart.

“Repeated letters did your uncle write to his brother, assuring him of the fidelity of his wife; and as a proof of her nice sense of honour, added, that no male visitor, except himself and me, had been admitted at the castle since his departure.

“These letters your father read with

very opposite sentiments to what they were meant to produce in him.

"The period now arrived which he had determined should stamp his happiness or misery. Robert, as it had been preconcerted, returned to the castle with information of your father's having been assassinated in the Wolf's Wood in his return from Vienna; and the late conduct of your uncle represented him to your mother as the murderer of her husband."

"Oh!" exclaimed Alphonfus, "I remember well the accusation which she then alleged against him; 'twas then I swore to —"

"No more of that now," interrupted the holy man. "Hear the conclusion of

thy parent's fate :— when count Frederic arrived at the castle, and you left him with your mother, she accused him with the murder of his brother on the pretensions of his late conduct to her ; he denied the charge, again urged his pretended love for her, and departed.

“ On the next day, as you doubtless recollect, he returned to the castle ; he re-iterated his love ; she knelt to him, and implored him to cease adding pangs to the agony he had already inflicted on her. At this instant, as your mother has since told me, you entered the apartment : — this explains to you one mystery which you could not solve.

“ Unknown to any one, I that night introduced your father into his own castle ; for,

as you may well suppose, he had not believed that his brother had written to him true accounts of his wife, and had only acted this farce the more deeply to entrap her, while the close of this hazardous experiment lay with himself.

“ In the middle of that night a noise in your mother’s chamber alarmed her, — she shrieked; a voice which she immediately concluded to be count Frederic’s addressed her in accents of familiar love; she sprang from the bed, as the person advanced towards it; he held her arm; she stretched out her other hand to a table near the bed, and grasping a dagger which she had lately worn to defend herself from count Frederic, should he have attempted force upon her person, and which she now believed him to

be doing, she pierced him who held her to the heart.

“Till the dawn arose, she thought herself the murderer of count Frederic; but alas! she beheld her bleeding husband, killed by her own hand! Immediately the vow she had exacted from you recurred to her, and constituted no small part of her agony; for the mad state of her brain taught her to believe you would fulfil it. What followed that morning, you know better than myself.”

“Oh, God!” cried Alphonfus, in accents that seemed to proceed from a frame whose every nerve was racked by agony, “’till now I never knew what misery was! Oh, ye pitying angels, bless my unhappy mo-

ther! — Forgive my erring father! — Oh, father! thou said'st well that I should no longer press to disobey my mother, when I knew the cause of her commands: — 'twere death to both to meet! — Oh, that vow!" Convulsed by pangs of sorrow he sunk upon count Byroff.

Recovering, he fixed his eyes on the friar: — "Oh, wretch! wretch! doomed to be cursed for parricide or perjury!" He inarticulately whispered, while sighs of agony partially choaked his utterance.

"Comfort thee, my son: the church is able, and, I doubt not, will be willing to absolve thee from an oath of such a strange nature."

"Oh, her bloody hand! — methinks I

see it now! — I would have embraced her, but she forbade me." He paused. "Oh, horrible! I swore to murder her who gave me being." He shuddered. "Fool that I was to say that misery had shot at me her keenest shafts, ere I had heard this tale of woe; she has but one other in her quiver that can pierce me. I will not part from thee!" he exclaimed, flying to Laurretta, and clasping her to his bosom. He then turned to the friar: — "Go on, good father: I can hear any thing now; thou shouldst have blunted thus my senses long ago: — go on, I pray thee."

"I will briefly relate the sequel of my tale," returned the friar, with a look to count Byroff, which indicated that he feared to disobey the request of Alphonfus, and yet was apprehensive his senses were again per-

plexed. "At an early hour I was sent for by your mother; and frantic with grief she confessed to me her involuntary crime, and its consequences. Shortly after count Frederic arrived at the castle, the sad tidings were announced to him by me: never did I behold a man so agonised; he immediately declared to your mother the cause of his pretended love for her, and cursed himself for having been the blind instrument of his brother's jealousy and suspicion.

"The countess entreated me in the most supplicating terms to hide from the world the real means of her husband's death, and to circulate an immediate report of her death: to execute the latter, I was under the necessity of calling in the assistance of some of my brother friars,

and we contrived by a pretended funeral to accomplish her wish; after this ceremony, as you was no where to be found, and that count Frederic declared himself determined to pass his future days in seclusion from the world, at the monastery of Saint Paul, the servants were discharged, and the gates of the castle locked.

“Your mother had during this interval been secreted in the apartment to which the secret door in the south turret leads. On the first night of the evacuation of the castle I visited your mother, whom I had constantly supplied with the little provision she had required, and she then told me, that she had formed a resolution of passing the sad remainder of her days in solitude in the castle. I reprobated this idea: but she was firm in her determina-

tion, and no arguments could divert her from her purpose.

“An empty coffin had been brought in pomp by means of Robert’s adroitness from the Wolf’s Wood; in this we contrived to deposit secretly your father’s remains, and it was then placed in the vault beneath the chapel; but, by the earnest entreaties of the countess, again removed into the chapel: and by it she has every night since prayed, and inflicted on herself voluntary punishments.”

“’Twas there I saw her, — methought she rose from the coffin when I beheld her!” cried Alphonfus.

“But the midnight bell —” said count Byroff.

"Was tolled by her," interrupted the friar, "for the double purpose of keeping idle visitants from the castle, under the idea of its being haunted, and to call to her two holy men of our monastery, who, by turns, together with myself, visited her every night to assist her prayers over the body of her husband."

"But you were not with her," said Alphonsus, "when I beheld her in the chapel."

"No: we had left the castle, but she remained praying by the coffin."

"How know you this?"

"She informed me, that on the night on which I now find you entered the

castle, she had seen a man advance a few paces into the chapel, who on beholding her had fled away alarmed."

"Oh! the piercing recollection of that night!" cried Alphonfus. "Oh, what did I not then feel!"

"How did you escape from the castle?" asked father Nicholas.

"Frenzy gave me strength to burst the window at the extremity of the hall, and through it I effected my flight."

"Count Frederic," continued the friar, "immediately retired to the monastery of Saint Paul, and did not long survive his brother. Ever since your father's death,

the brethren of the Holy Spirit have, by your mother's permission, enjoyed the rents of the estate on which the castle stands, in recompense for their nightly visits, and the assistance of their prayers. I often entreated her to have you sought after, and restore you to your legal possessions: but a wild frenzy of alarm always forbade me to urge my petition, though she unremittingly grieved at the hard lot you were innocently suffering.

"Yesterday morning I visited her alone, for the purpose of informing her of my suspicions, drawn from the name I had heard you called by, and many words I had heard you let fall, of you, her son, being now in the vicinity of the castle?"

“Was not your visit to the castle paid between the hours of three and four?” asked count Byroff.

The holy man answered that it was, and this explained to the count the means by which the postern gate had been opened to him.

Father Nicholas continued : — “ In return for the information I brought her, she only entreated that you might not see her, scarcely, I believe, crediting what I told her I surmised relative to you ; for her faculties have been impaired by her distress of mind. The words you this morning addressed to me confirmed my conjecture, and I again visited her this afternoon ; she heard me, contrary to my expectation, with composure ; wept when she learnt

that you had beheld each other, still however thankful she had not known you; declared her intention of putting you in possession of your natural rights, by immediately departing from the castle; and above all entreated, that when I had related to you her unhappy story, you would confer on her the only proof of affection she could ever desire, or hope to receive from you, namely, your never attempting to see her more."

Alphonfus's spirits were exhausted even to infantine weakness; he seemed no longer to attend to the words of the friar; he urged no farther inquiry into this heart-rending business; but wept, and that without intermission.

The holy man advised that he should

retire to rest, and endeavour to compose his spirits; he retired to bed, but without giving any signs that he knew what he did; he sunk on the pillow, and spoke no more that night.

Having addressed some words of comfort to Laretta, who, except that she respired, existed not, or at least without a thought to bestow on any other object than her Alphonfus and his sorrows; and having told count Byroff that he was called away by an urgent concern, but would return in the morning as early as he was able, father Nicholas left the inn, bestowing a benediction on its inhabitants.

The night passed on in sorrowing silence, broken only by occasional comments on what they had heard from the

friar, on the part of count Byroff and his daughter; and heart-drawn sighs on the part of Alphonfus.

The tenth hour of the morning had founded ere the holy man arrived; he found Alphonfus fallen into a gentle slumber. Count Byroff and the friar had a copious topic for conversation; they indulged themselves in discussing it till Lauretta came to inform them that Alphonfus was awake, and had inquired for the father.

They ascended to his chamber.—“Father,” said Alphonfus, on beholding the friar, “you did not tell me whither my unhappy mother was gone.”

“When I left you last,” replied the

holy man, "she was still in Cohenburg castle; I have this night conveyed her to the convent of the Virgin Maria, seven leagues distant from hence, and whose votaries are not permitted, when they have once entered its walls, ever again to hold converse with the world."

"What said she at parting? — nothing which you were to repeat to me from her?"

"She bade me tell you, that her blessing would fall a curse upon you, — thus she forbore to speak it. She entreats your prayers, and that you will sometimes view with pity her resemblance."

The friar here put into Alphonfus's hand a small portrait of his mother.

Alphonfus gazed eagerly upon it, then kissed it. "Forgive her, heaven!" he exclaimed. A small ribband was fastened to the picture; he tied it round his neck, and turned the face inward to his bosom. "Lie there in peace," he cried: "and, oh! may the shades of my dear father and mother hereafter unite in scenes of bliss, with all the warmth and tenderness their images are now connected in my heart."

CHAP. XXVI.

But happy they! the happiest of their kind!
Whom gentler stars unite, and in one fate
Their hearts, their fortunes, and their beings blend.

THOMSON.

IN the course of a few days Alphonfus's health and spirits were sufficiently restored to permit him to visit Cohenburg castle; by the care of father Nicholas, the coffin which contained the remains of the late count had been replaced in the vault; but still it required more fortitude than Alphonfus could at that time command, to enter, unmoved, the chapel, and the chamber in which his mother had so mysteriously addressed him on the morning of her sending him away from the castle

As the castle had required but little preparation to render it fit for the reception of Alphonfus and his Lauretta, count Byroff and the friar had given the necessary orders to that purpose, which had been performed by the daughter of the landlord, and her husband, who resided in the village.

As for Jacques, from the first moment of his receiving the intelligence of Alphonfus's restoration to his rank and possessions, he could find time for nothing but congratulations alternately bestowed on the count, Alphonfus, and Lauretta; and when they would no longer listen to them, he congratulated himself by singing and dancing, every step he moved.

The landlord, on the first arrival of the

travellers at his house, had been an attentive and pleasing host; but no sooner did he learn that the heir of Cohenburg castle was an inmate with him, than his attentions became so over-strained, that they lost the very effect of pleasing, they had so strongly possessed, when nothing more than ordinary was meant to be conveyed by them: he was in a bustle all day long, whether he had employment to occasion his being so or not: and, communicative as he had before naturally been, he now seemed to make it a point of politeness, hardly to answer the questions which were asked of him.

Visiting frequently the neighbouring village in his twofold character of priest and physician, father Nicholas was well acquainted with its inhabitants, and rea-

dily engaged in it such servants as were immediately necessary to Alphonfus's new establishment; at the same time using his most sedulous endeavours to allay that surprise which would naturally be excited, on the sudden appearance of the heir of the castle.

On the day after Alphonfus became an inhabitant of the castle, he received the congratulations of the brothers of the Holy Spirit in person; how closely their lips and hearts were in unison, deprived as they now were of the rents they had been so long enjoying, it is not perhaps quite fair too accurately to investigate, considering in how handsome a manner they outwardly comported themselves. Jacques stood laughing unobserved in the hall as they went out. "*Ad mes amis,*" he cried,

“you drank the ghost’s health just in time; *plait à Dieu*, you may never have the opportunity again.”

Father Nicholas had immediately written to the bishop, stating the peculiarity of Alphonfus’s unfortunate situation with regard to his oath, and entreating for him the utmost indulgence of the church; and absolution was readily obtained for him, on the obligation of his bestowing a sum of money on a convent of poor nuns, and undergoing a slight penance.

Alphonfus had resided nearly three months at Cohenburg castle, and the poignancy of reflection was beginning to be softened by scenes of domestic happiness, when Jacques one day abruptly entering the apartment, panting for breath,

and hardly able to articulate, addressing himself to count Byroff, exclaimed, "Huzza, *monfieur* ! huzza ! *graces à Dieu*, we have not an enemy in the world now, but my uncle Perlet, and the Bastile."

Count Byroff eagerly inquired what occurrence had called forth such extraordinary signs of joy ; but it was some time before Jacques could recover breath sufficient to answer : at length he said, "I'll tell you, *monfieur* : Kroonzer and all the rest of them are sent to the gallies."

"How have you heard this?" asked count Byroff. "Why, *monfieur*, I have just been as far as the little inn," (a very constant practice with Jacques, who had been in habits of great intimacy with the landlord since the time of his residing at his house):

“and whom should I meet there, *monseigneur*, but a man, a stranger; so the landlord asked him what news; and so he told us, that a gang of robbers had been discovered in an old castle, not a day’s journey from Inspruck. You may think I knew pretty well where he meant, *monseigneur*. ‘How were they found out?’ said I; so he told us, that a gentleman that was travelling that way, had been attacked by them, and that his servants had managed to take one of the banditti prisoner, who had confessed all their tricks, and that the gentleman had had them all taken up, and that they had been condemned by the emperor, to be sold for galley slaves, and sent to the Turks. I wish, *de toute ma vie*, they had been sent to the Bastille.”

Count Byroff immediately took mea-

tures for inquiring into the truth of this report ; and to the excessive delight of Jacques, who, since his escape from the banditti, had stood in great fear, though he had endeavoured to hide it, of being fetched back by them and punished for his desertion,—and to the no small though suppressed satisfaction of count Byroff, who, from the threatened vengeance of Kroonzer, had thought himself in rather an unpleasant predicament, — the report proved to be a true one.

About this time Alphonfus employed a person recommended to his confidence by father Nicholas, to pass over into Italy, and ascertain whether count Arieno was still in existence ; intending, if he was alive, to visit Venice himself, together with his Lauretta, whom he looked upon

as entitled to become the heiress of count Arieno's property; and that it became him on this account to make her known to her grandfather; but the messenger returned with information, that count Arieno having been proved to be an accomplice with another senator who had embezzled some part of the public revenue, he had died on the scaffold, and his entire property been confiscated to the state.

Thus the wretch whose life had been a disgrace to humanity, was punished by a death equally shocking to the feelings of civilization.

The countess Anna lived but a few months in the seclusion in which she had chosen to end her days; and little doubtful of her forgiveness in a happier state,

for the commission of an involuntary crime, Alphonfus could not lament, that her sorrows on earth were ended.

Some years after this, an accident introduced to each other's sight Alphonfus and the baron Smaldart; time had softened the resentment the baron had, immediately on the death of the chevalier D' Aignon, borne to Alphonfus; and Alphonfus had long wished a reconciliation to take place. Thus, though neither party proposed it, both visibly promoted it; and it was effected to their mutual satisfaction.

Shortly after the baron accepted an invitation given him by Alphonfus to visit Cohenburg castle, and beheld a scene

that called forth in him the tenderest feelings ; Alphonfus and his Lauretta, living in the splendor of rank, yet deriving their comforts from domestic happiness ; count Byroff revered by his son and daughter ; beloved and caressed by their offspring ; that offspring growing up in the sanctioned felicity of innocence, sweetened by the indulgence of a fond grandfather, the endearments of a doating mother, and the instructions of a father, competent to give them. “ Learn, above all, my children,” Alphonfus would often repeat to them, “ to avoid suspicion ; for as it is the source of crimes, it is also the worst of crimes, attaching itself with equal mischief to the guilty and the innocent ; it is an endless pang to him who harbours it ; for it dies only when he dies, and then too

often leaves a curse on those that follow him ; it is the influence of evil that breeds suspicion, the noble spirit of charity that subdues it !”